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DETECTIVE STORIES

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SEPT. 15, 1923 NO. 140

A NEW SERIAL

"THE HOUSE WHERE DEAD MEN DWELL"

by Frederick C. Davis

Feature Mystery Story

FOR SHAME

by

WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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ISSUED TWICE A MONTH

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What You May Expect

WE are very much pleased to announce that the next feature story in this magazine will be written by your old favorite, Hamilton Craigie. It is entitled "The Triple Cross" and is one of the most exciting and interesting stories that this talented author has ever written. Do not miss reading this story under any circumstance, as it is one of the rarest treats we have ever published. It will be issued about September 15th. Why not order a copy ahead from your newsdealers?

The second part of Frederick C. Davis's remarkable serial, "The House Where Dead Men Live," will appear in our next number and will be even more interesting than the introductory chapters.

For those of our readers who like scientific articles, written by an expert, we have prepared one of the most intensely interesting expositions of criminal methods ever published. The author is Carl H. Getz. This writer is thoroughly familiar with every subject he handles. His article is entitled "Defeating the Currency Raiser."

We also wish to call your special attention to the fact that the next number will contain more than the usual allotment of short stories. The first, by Paul Triem, is a gripping detective romance called "With His Own Gun" and cannot fail to please you. Next we have the splendid detective story by J. B. Warrenton, "Tricked and Trapped." We are sure you will enjoy reading it. Third, there will be a little gem entitled "Mrs. Blanchard's Emeralds," written by Frederick W. Johnston. It will make you hold your breath with suspense from beginning to end. Another splendid detective story, by D. L. Radway, is entitled "The Double Penalty"; and last, but not least, there will be one of the most uncanny mystery stories ever written. Frederic Hayn is the author and the title is "The Skull." Without exception this weird story is one of the most peculiar ever imagined by an author. We are sure you will enjoy every line of it.

We will also have a large number of short articles by the best writers on a great diversity of strange subjects. You cannot afford to miss reading any of these odd items, as there is not a dull line in any of them.

We also wish to let you know that we are making great preparations to issue some stories written by the most prominent authors of detective fiction in the world. Surprising announcements will soon be made on this page.

THE EDITOR.

.FOR SHAME.

By William Hamilton Osborne

CHAPTER ONE

THERE was something suggestively sinister in the attitude and bearing of the hunched-up individual who stood blinking at the gold letters on the ground-glass door of room three hundred and three. His every movement was uncanny. His progress from the elevator to this office had been a sort of slinking progress. In making his way he had sidled along close to the corridor walls, as one who would avoid the eye of man, the light of day. Arrived at his destination, he stood there for a moment, clutching at the door frame, mouthing to himself. Then he drew off the mangy fur cap which adorned his head, turned the doorknob stealthily, and crept in.

Cap in hand and making low obeisance to a young woman who was sitting just inside the door, this apparition asked for the assemblyman. He did more than this, he smiled at the young woman; his smile was an unholy grin that bared two rows of yellow teeth. The young woman, who had risen, backed away from him in affright.

"I don't know," she lied falteringly, "that the assemblyman is in."

The caller crooked a knowing finger at her.

"He's in," he chuckled; "I watched for him. He's in."

The young woman wilted.

"Will you let me have your name?" she said.

The unkempt caller shook his head.

"No name—no name," responded he; "he's a servant of the public, and I'm a servant of the public. You tell him that a servant of the public wants to see him on the public's business. That's enough." And as he said it he gurgled in his throat.

The young woman was not satisfied.

"I'm afraid," she persisted, "that you'll have to be more definite than that."

For answer this terrifying caller clawed the air. He lurched toward the young woman.

"My business is with him; I'll be definite with him," he croaked. The girl stood not upon the order of her going. Panicstricken, she fled forthwith into an inner room.

Inside at his desk sat Archer Youngblood. He was floor leader of his party in the house. He was the youngest legislator in the state. This accorded with his family traditions. The Youngbloods began their political careers always at an early age.

Archer was a good politician. He was a servant of the public. He was by no means

exclusive. It was his rule to see everybody that he had time to see. The young woman advised him of the advent of the man with the fur cap.

"He's horrible," she said.

"So much the better," nodded Archer Youngblood; "show him in."

His visitor crept into the room much as he had crept along the corridor outside. He shuffled warily across the floor and brought up at one corner of Archer Youngblood's desk. He stood there, twisting his greasy cap with grimy hands, mouthing at Archer, blinking at him.

Archer stared at him frankly, wonderingly. Then something of the girl's terror imbued him. He pushed his chair back from his desk, in order to be ready for what might be coming next.

The girl had been right. This man was horrible. The whites of his eyes were as yellow as his teeth. His lustreless hair hung in stiff, stringy wisps over his forehead. Under the grime his face was white like the stomach of a toad.

This man stared back at Archer. Then he grinned some more.

"Ah, you're a Youngblood, I can see," he croaked; "a Youngblood and the last and only one of the line. If you should die, young sir," he said, "a great and noble family would be snuffed out."

Archer made ready for a spring.

"What do you know about the Youngbloods?" he demanded sharply.

"Ha!" returned his caller, "what don't I know about 'em. Oyer and Terminer! Oyer and Terminer!" He sidled over to a portrait that was hanging from the wall. "Your grandfather, God bless him," croaked this creature, "Archer Youngblood the first. Sitting in Oyer and Terminer up there in the courthouse on the hill, it was your grandfather, young sir, that gave me my very first assignment. Thirty-seven years ago that was. Tom Clyde—the man that killed his sweetheart by jamming another man's love letters down her throat."

He shuffled his way to another painting on another wall. Uncertainly he peered at this portrait.

"Ha!" he queried falteringly, "this ain't your father, man?"

Archer humored him. It was Archer's way to humor everybody.

"My mother's father—that's Quimby," he returned.

"Quimby!" gurgled his visitor happily. "Quimby, the old chief justice. Man, you keep your stock of jurists on both sides. Quimby, your mother's father, think of that! He sat long upon the bench, young sir. He knew his business. Quimby, he was one of my own father's benefactors, man. Forty-three assignments my father got from Quimby in his time. Let him rest in peace."

He shuffled over to another picture. The glow of complete recognition sprang to his eyes.

"Your father," he said, his throat working with excitement, "there he sits, looking down upon me. Justice Archer Youngblood, the second." He pointed with his tortured cap. "There he is, as large as life. It was your father who was my friend."

This man was getting on Archer Youngblood's nerves and he shivered.

"Did you know my father?" he inquired.

"I knew him"—the abomination seized upon a chair and dragged it toward the desk—"I knew him well—by sight."

Archer was relieved.

"You have some business with me?" he demanded curtly.

The other man slumped into his chair.

"I have," he whispered hoarsely, "public business."

"Let's get to it, then," said Archer.

His unwelcome guest flicked a speck of dust from the surface of the desk with his greasy cap.

"Assemblyman Youngblood," he proceeded, "you are the chairman of the committee that's to report upon this new electrocution bill."

"I am," said Archer.

"I am one of your constituents," went on the other man earnestly, "and I should be heard upon this bill."

"What have you to say about it?" queried Archer.

"Assemblyman," said this obnoxious call-

er, once more twisting his fur cap in his hands, "I'm here in opposition to this bill."

"Opposition!" cried Archer in surprise. "What opposition can there be to such a bill? The bill was introduced in compliance with a popular demand. What have you got against electrocution, I should like to know?"

The other man arose. He pounded softly, mushily upon the desk with his fur cap.

"I've got everything against it," he returned, his eyes glittering with malevolence; "it's a method of cruel and unusual punishment. I've got that against it, man."

"You're crazy," retorted Archer genially; "it's a method adopted by most all the states in the union. Why not by us? It's the most humane method up to date. Our experts tell us so."

"Humane," snorted his visitor, "it's inhuman, man. You've had experts, have you? And what kind of experts did you have? I didn't hear about these experts. I wasn't notified about all this. Talking of experts, now I'm an expert. I'm the expert, you might say, on this. Why didn't you call me?"

"You?" demanded Archer. "Are you a physician? Are you an electrical engineer?"

The apparition shook his head.

"I'm not an electrical engineer; I'm not an electrician, even. I could have been one maybe, if they'd only let me know about it years ago. I'm too old now. But you should have had me testify; you should have had me demonstrate. I tell you, man, I'm the only expert in this state."

Archer was distinctly puzzled now.

"Who are you, anyway?" he cried.

For answer his caller drew from his clothes a pigskin wallet that had absorbed the grime of ages.

"Jimmy Podsnap, the bank messenger," he informed Archer gleefully; "he gave me this wallet on the very day he died." He took from the wallet a calling card and laid it on the desk. Archer Youngblood didn't look at it at once. He felt forced to keep his eyes fixed on this man's face—stared at him, horribly fascinated now.

"You mean Podsnap, the man that killed the cashier of the Second National?" gasped Archer.

His caller nodded.

"The very man," he said. He tapped the pigskin wallet affectionately, then thrust it back from whence it came.

Archer shivered some more.

"Do you mean to tell me then," demanded Archer, "that you're——"

"You've got it," nodded the other, blinking and bowing; "I mean to tell you that I'm the public hangman of this state."

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!" gasped Archer weakly. He backed his chair still further from his desk.

His visitor gesticulated wildly with his cap.

"Now, there it is," cried the public hangman desperately; "you see, assemblyman, you're like everybody else. I'm a servant of the public, just as my father before me was a servant of the public. We've been servants of a public that none of you could get along without. And yet the minute that you meet us face to face you shun us. All of you. Yet in my time one hundred and thirteen jobs have been assigned to me. Mark you that I'm good for a hundred and thirteen more of 'em, if your meddling legislators will only let me be."

Instinctively Archer loosened his collar. He gulped.

"Your interest in this matter then is purely personal," he returned.

"More than that—more than that, I tell you," cried the public hangman; "I tell you that I have regard for what's humane——"

"You're beaten at all points then," said Archer.

"How do you know I'm beaten?" demanded his visitor. "I tell you that this bill should be held up. I tell you that the hearing on this bill should be adjourned. It won't be long before I'll get another job. The court of errors has a case before it now. The court of errors knows its business. It's a hanging court. Job number one hundred and fourteen will come to me from them. Then I can demonstrate."

"You can't demonstrate to me," said Archer, shivering.

"The other thing ain't dignified," persist-

ed his caller; "you should have heard your father say it. There was a speech worth while. Hanged by the neck until you're dead! Man, that's classical. Old Quimby there, the old C. J. Can you figure him telling some roustabout to sit in a chair until he's dead? A thing like that is foolish, can't you see?"

"I see," nodded Archer, "that if this bill goes through and becomes a law you'll lose your job."

"Man to man," said the other in a confidential tone of voice, "there's the rub. This job is my job. By birth and training it's my job. And I'm getting old—I'm getting old. Too old to get another job. And nobody will let me get another job. You don't want me sitting in your office, do you? Other men don't want me working in their shops. Sooner or later they'll find out what I was and out I go. And I'm no common workman. I'm not fitted for another job. Mine is a profession. And, so help me, I've paid the price. My father warned me it was so; we both have paid. One and all, the people shun me. You might think I was a leper instead of being a necessary public servant. Even my children——"

"Great guns!" cried Archer; "you haven't got—children."

"Ah," nodded the hangman, "it was because I made a visit to my son that I didn't know about this bill. I made a visit to my son in West Virginia. He didn't want me; I soon found that out. He kept me from his wife and family. You'd think I was the plague."

"How many children have you got?" demanded Archer.

"Three times I have married," grinned the old ghoul; "seven children I have had in all. Seven children, and seven of them living. Living where? There ain't one of them that'll settle down inside the limits of this state. Scattered they are—scattered all over the United States. They won't come to me, and I can't go to them. Just because I've served the public I'm alone. And if you pass this bill, and this bill becomes a law, see what'll come of it—I'm done."

Archer felt positively ill. He rose.

"You're too late," he said, "so far as I'm concerned. The bill was reported favorably out of committee three days ago. It passed the house last night. The Senate's got it. I can do nothing for you now. You'd best see Senator Rindell, then call on the governor. You've got no time to lose. Rindell has an office in this building. See him now. If you don't you'll be too late."

With one hand to his throat Archer stood stiffly against the wall. It seemed an eternity before his caller shuffled across the floor and disappeared into the outer room. Once he had gone Archer sprang to a window and flung it wide. He opened all the windows. He thrust his head far out into the sun. He needed all the air that he could get.

CHAPTER TWO

"FAUGH!" cried Archer Youngblood in disgust.

His head was still out of the window, he was gulping into his system all the oxygen that he could hold, when he felt a surreptitious tug upon his arm. He started violently, but his start was unwarranted. A woman stenographer was clutching at his sleeve. Archer drew his head and shoulders into the room again.

"Has—has that beast gone?" he demanded.

The girl nodded.

"Mr. Perry Hooker wants to see you now," she said.

Her young employer groaned.

"Worse and more of it," he returned, indulging himself in a Youngblood grimace. "All right; you'll have to show him in."

Hooker was shown in. He came, his hand and arm outstretched. Archer looked at Perry Hooker, then at Hooker's outstretched hand, after which he shook his head.

Perry Hooker turned white.

"Not going to shake hands with me?" he faltered.

Archer Youngblood grinned.

"Not until I've washed up," he said.

"I've been entertaining the hangman unawares."

"Entertaining the who?" demanded Perry Hooker.

In a far corner of Archer's office there was a stationary washstand. To the naked eye it was invisible, as it was surrounded by a huge, old-fashioned screen. Archer disappeared behind this screen and turned the water on.

"The public hangman," repeated the unseen Archer.

Hooker was one of those suave gentlemen who never are surprised at anything.

"I would like to know more," said Hooker over his shoulder. "Who is this public hangman? What is his name?"

"I don't know his name," responded Archer, "and I never want to know his name."

Perry Hooker had a nose for inside information. Inside information was inside information, no matter how obtained. He glanced keenly at the papers that were spread about on Archer's desk. Then he saw the hangman's card. He picked it up and glanced at it casually. Noiselessly he swung about, and for a moment eyed the big screen in the corner. Archer was still performing his ablutions behind that screen. Noting that he was wholly unobserved, Perry Hooker thrust the hangman's card into his own waistcoat pocket.

"The name," persisted Hooker. "I didn't catch the name."

Archer emerged from behind the screen, vigorously toweling his hands and wrists.

"I don't know his name, I tell you," he returned; "he passed out of my existence for good and all when he left this office." He tossed the towel deftly over the top of the screen and came back to his desk. "Hooker," he added dully, "what have you got up your sleeve?"

His question was justified. Hooker invariably had something up his sleeve. It was his business to keep things up his sleeve. By vocation he was a stock broker, and he looked the part. As a matter of fact, Hooker always looked like a million dollars; with Archer Youngblood he assayed at something less than thirty cents.

He was a clever gentleman, this Perry Hooker, always resourceful and ingenious. He could fool most people once, and a good many of them twice. By avocation he was a lobbyist, and a persistent one. He was promiscuous. He would lobby anything through the state house for anybody who would pay his price. In neither of his callings had he been remarkably successful. There was a reason: his statements of fact were wholly unreliable, he was specious, he was plausible, he was dangerous. Archer Youngblood had introduced into the House salutary legislation regulating the traffic in drugs. Over in New York there was a huge drug manufacturing concern that didn't like this measure; it had been attacking Archer's drug bill tooth and nail. Perry Hooker was the local representative—for state house purposes—of this drug concern. In connection with this legislation Hooker had made Archer's life miserable for months on end. Archer had to force himself to barely tolerate the man.

"Come across with it," exclaimed Archer curtly; "this is my busy day."

Hooker smiled mysteriously. "I've got something up my sleeve," he returned, "but that something isn't drugs." He drew a piece of paper from his pocket. "The number of the house," he said, "is eleven State House Square."

"What about it?" demanded Archer.

"You know the house?" queried Hooker.

"I ought to," nodded Archer; "all my life I've lived a block away."

"That house," went on Hooker, "belongs to Mrs. Godfrey Balestier."

"Right," said Archer.

"It's been vacant," went on Hooker, "ever since the death of Godfrey Balestier. I'm told you're agent for that house."

"I'm counsel for Mrs. Godfrey Balestier," said Archer.

"I've been informed that she wants to rent it furnished," continued Hooker.

"She does," conceded Archer, "to the right kind of a tenant. Who have you got in mind?"

"How much rent is she looking for?" asked Hooker.

Archer parried the question.

"First tell me who's your man?"

"He's financially responsible," retorted Hooker; "he'll put up one whole year's rental in advance."

"Looks good," conceded Archer; "how much commission will you want?"

"Not one red cent," answered Hooker.

Archer gasped.

"You sure of that?" he demanded.

"Positively," said the other.

"Who's your man?" persisted the legislator.

Hooker smiled a wide smile.

"My man," said he, "is myself."

Archer for the moment was shocked into silence. But he made a quick recovery.

"My friend," he said, "the rental for the Balestier place is five thousand dollars a year."

Hooker whistled in amazement.

"Five thousand!" he echoed. "Archer, there's no place in State House Square, except your place and the governor's, that's worth five thousand dollars a year. The Balestier place is worth just half of that. I don't want to buy it, Archer. I only want a lease."

Archer was adamant.

"Five thousand dollars is the rent," he repeated, "subject to Mrs. Godfrey Balestier's approval of the tenant."

"Oh, as to that," said Hooker, "you can tell her what I tell you now. Archer, I don't mind having you know that I've cleaned up; at last I've called the turn upon the Street. The missus and I intend to live now where we belong—up near folks like you."

Archer winced, but he was game. He had to be. The Balestier place had been vacant too long. It was disintegrating. Taxes were eating it up. After Hooker had gone Archer called on Mrs. Balestier to talk it over, and he saw her at her boarding place, the Pines.

Mrs. Balestier didn't like the prospect of having such a man as Hooker for a tenant any more than Archer did. "I might better have sold to Mr. Wintermute, your pork man, Archer," she exclaimed.

Archer didn't agree with her.

"A pork man's always a pork man," he returned, "while a three years' lease is a lease."

The lady sighed.

"I am the first to profane the sacred precinct of the Square by letting my house," she said, "but what am I to do, Archer? I need the money. Junior isn't earning much, you know. I'm afraid I've just got to let this man have my house, that's all."

And Archer saw that it was so. He went back to his office, and in a few days he sent for Hooker.

"You're a lucky man to get that house for five thousand," said Archer.

Hooker blinked his eyes.

"Feels like a flimflam game," he said, "but I suppose I've got to stand the gaff."

"You've seen the house inside, haven't you?" asked Archer.

"No," answered Hooker.

"You'll want to see it then," nodded the young politician a bit hopefully, "before you sign the lease."

"Well," nodded the other slowly, "we want the house. That's the important thing. But I suppose we ought to have a look inside."

"You've got to, so far as I'm concerned," said Archer; "no aftermaths. I want you to know what you're getting in advance. At any rate your wife must have a look."

"Just as you say," said Hooker.

"To-morrow's Saturday. I'll meet you on the porch of the Balestier place at half-past twelve and show you through."

He was there on the dot. The State House clock was tolling the halfhour. Five minutes later the Hookers drove up in a new sedan. There were four of them in all. Two, of course, were Perry Hooker and his wife, the latter very smartly gowned and artistically rouged. There was a glint of unconcealed satisfaction in her eyes as Hooker introduced her to the aristocratic Youngblood of the Square. She was a frankly forward, eager person.

"Isn't it fine that we're to be your neighbors?" she asked ecstatically.

Hooker chuckled.

"Fine for us, she means," he explained half apologetically.

Archer politely mumbled vague nothings.

How he detested these people in his heart! Hooker busily dragged forward a third member of the party.

"My nephew, Joey Welcher. I think you know him," said Hooker.

Archer knew young Welcher. Joey was a youthful but successful practitioner in the police courts of the town. He wore a pair of yellow gloves, and was decorated with a yellow cane.

"Met you at the Lunch Club many times," said Joey, with the manner of one newborn to the Square.

Joey was the last straw. Archer's gorge rose at these interlopers. He could have been sent to jail for what he thought about them. But Hooker was coming forward with another member of the coterie.

"Last, but by no means least," said Hooker, "let me present a gem of purest ray serene. Here is my wife's cousin, Miss Ruth Savacool, late of Indiana."

Archer was glad to note that here was a freshly pretty girl. He realized, quite swiftly, that she was unlike the other three. Her color came and went as Archer looked into her eyes. With girlish impetuosity she held out her hand.

"I'm Riki Tikki Tavi, Mr. Youngblood," she confessed, "always I have to run and find out." She flashed upon him a winsome, vivid smile, and yet to Archer it seemed somehow that there was trouble shining from her eyes.

"You run along with me," said Archer; "we'll both find out."

CHAPTER THREE

ARCHER inserted his key in the front door, and they crossed the threshold of the Balestier homestead. As they did so silence fell upon them. Here was a mansion with the impress of five generations stamped indelibly upon it. Archer led the way confidently into the library. There was no room on the Square that could vie with this in simple dignity and solid comfort. This room was Archer's trump card. Hopefully he watched the faces of Perry Hooker and the man's wife. He was sure that on this showing they would turn the old place down. He chuckled as he saw blank disappointment, absolute chagrin, struggle to their countenances.

"Well," gulped Hooker dejectedly, "I suppose it's some satisfaction that it's old."

"That woman has a nerve to ask five thousand just for this," said Mrs. Hooker agreeably.

Archer was delighted.

"I can't do any more than show you the place," he said apologetically. The Savacool girl, who had been for the moment in the background, crept forward now and looked about. Involuntarily she caught Archer by the arm.

"People," she cried wistfully, "this—this is a real home."

Archer watched her as she said it. There was a strange, mysterious, hunted expression in her look. She seemed to Archer lonely, neglected, out of place—a wistful, winsome creature seeking for something that so far she hadn't found.

She sank gratefully into a comfortable chair—the oldest chair in the room.

"I want to live always in a house like this," she said.

It seemed to Archer that the atmosphere of the place had overcome her for the moment; she seemed to fight back grateful tears. He couldn't help watching her; he felt that within her some drama was acting itself out to the bitter end. The girl became conscious of Archer's surreptitious scrutiny. Her eyes blinking, with averted face she sprang to her feet.

"Do you mind," she choked, with an attempt at eagerness, "if I look around upstairs?"

She wanted to get away from the others for the moment; Archer could see that. Her emotions had been strangely stirred. She started for the stairway. Joey Welcher followed her.

"Come on, Ruthie," exclaimed Joey Welcher; "we'll make discoveries and explorations."

The girl moved swiftly onward, with Joey at her heels. Archer still watched her as she went. But some quick movement

behind him attracted his attention. He heard Mrs. Perry Hooker whisper to her husband.

"Why doesn't Joey leave her alone?" was what she said in protest.

"Why don't *you* leave *them* alone?" came back Perry, also in a whisper.

Archer showed them every nook and cranny in the homestead. He knew they didn't like the place, and hoped against hope that they would turn it down. Archer distinctly didn't like them; the more he saw of them the more this far from genial feeling grew. There was something else he distinctly didn't like, though it was quite as distinctly none of his business. In every nook and cranny that they visited they found Joey Welcher and the girl ahead of them; at all times the young police court lawyer crowded his attentions, welcome or unwelcome, on the girl.

"She says it's swell; she likes it fine," grinned Joey.

The Perry Hookers took the house for three long years. Archer had the lease ready in his pocket. Hooker handed out a check, certified, for five thousand dollars in advance. The deal was swiftly closed. The interloping Hookers abandoned the apartment where they had lived of late, shook from their feet the dust of their Lares and Penates as it were, and installed themselves in the sacred circle of the Square. They soon discovered, doubtless, that though in the Square, they were not *of* the Square. Archer Youngblood was the only man in the vicinity who had even a bowing acquaintance with Perry Hooker. This made seemingly but little difference to the Hookers. It soon became apparent, even to the suspecting Archer, that they hadn't moved there to disturb the old inhabitants, but merely to impress their own acquaintances and friends. There was no doubt that they succeeded in impressing their acquaintances and friends. They were able also to impress the society reporters for the local papers. The Perry Hookers made genteel noises. They kept open house. They scattered expensively engraved invitations with a lavish hand. In this distribution they never overlooked Youngblood. But Archer, who was a very busy young man when he wanted to be busy, took pains to overlook the invitations. His relations with the Hookers were on a wholly business basis, and on this basis he intended his relations with them to remain.

He caught glimpses of the girl now and then. Life in the capital city of many states is a rapid-fire affair. Something is always going on somewhere. Archer met the Hookers here, there, everywhere. This girl was new to most of it, it seemed. Her face was tinged with the hectic flush of gaiety; there was the glint of excitement in her eyes. Not always. At times he saw her dining out with Joey Welcher. He watched her carefully; he couldn't help it. And whenever he could catch her glance Archer detected that note of trouble in her eyes of insecurity, unrest. Joey escorted her about with assiduity and persistence. Often he kept her dashing about town in his gay red roadster.

Archer watched the girl as he watched the Perry Hookers. He learned that the girl had become a permanent addition to Hooker's household; it was whispered about that Perry was doing quite the handsome thing by this young relative of Mrs. Hooker's. That they spent money upon her was quite apparent; that they regarded her with over-affectionate concern went without saying. It was, however, plain to Archer on the very face of things that the girl's winsome beauty, her magnetic appeal, were a considerable asset to the Hookers. It was to be expected of them that they would exploit her to the limit. And yet Archer well knew Perry Hooker's tricks and manners. This simple explanation didn't satisfy. The more he watched the girl, the more he watched the Hookers, the more he became convinced in his own mind that there was mischief afoot—some game, deep and sinister, in which this girl, consciously or unconsciously, had an important part to play, and here was where the mystery came in.

One morning as Archer left his house he saw the girl seated, quite alone, in Joey Welcher's red roadster, which was drawn up at the curb in front of the Hookers' rented house. Archer crossed the Square and

halted in the thoroughfare on the off side of the car.

"It looks as though you liked us," remarked Archer; "how long do you stay?"

His question seemed to startle her.

"Oh," she answered a bit uncertainly, "I suppose—I expect to be here right along. I couldn't get along without the Square."

"Do you like us?" persisted Archer. He was a versatile young man, with unlimited conversational ability, but when he looked into this young woman's eyes he floundered always. He was floundering now helplessly. But the girl took his utterances as matters of importance. She answered to the best of her ability.

"Meaning?" she queried.

"We," nodded Archer, "the people of this town?"

The girl's glance was filled with vague longing. "Well, I don't know," she returned frankly; "you see, I haven't met you all. There are some people here"—her eyes wandered uneasily about the Square—"that I—that I would like to see more of. There are others that——"

Joey Welcher came out the front door of the Hooker house, whistling blithely to himself. A shade of annoyance crossed the girl's face. Archer held out his hand to her.

"Listen, Miss Savacool," he said earnestly, "if there is anything I can do for you at any time, you must surely let me know."

For one instant the girl leaned forward as though to detain him; he caught a half-fearful, pleading glance from her that it was not easy later to forget. Then she sank back again; Joey Welcher was at hand. Archer strode off, waving a fraternal hand to Joey as he went. A moment later they passed him, Joey explaining volubly to the girl, in tones intended for Archer's ears, that there was one fine fellow, Archer Youngblood, and no mistake.

When Archer reached his office that morning he found Eli Wintermute waiting for him. Eli was the head and front of Wintermute & Son. He was the pork and provision man who had tried to buy the Balestier house. Eli was easily the richest man in town. Archer was Eli's personal counsel, a fact of small importance, since Eli was one of those canny gentlemen who rarely had law business to transact.

Eli followed Archer into his private office and slumped heavily into a chair.

"Archer," he said confidentially, "I'd like to have you shut that door."

Archer shut the door and waited expectantly.

"Now," went on his client in a worried tone of voice, "I want your opinion on a personal matter. You know this Perry Hooker pretty well?"

"Yes, I know him," returned Archer noncommittally.

"I've got nothing against him," went on the pork man; "nothing at all. He's made a little pile, and if he wants to spend it right away that's his business and not mine. But there's a girl that's living with him."

"Miss Savacool," said Archer.

"Ah," nodded the pork man, "it's about her I want to talk. You know her, maybe, too?"

"I've met her," nodded Archer; "you know I rented Perry Hooker the Balestier place."

"There you go," said Eli Wintermute; "now I wouldn't be in all this peck of trouble if it wasn't for that place. If this Mrs. Balestier had let me have that house when I asked her for it I would be out of trouble now. But I want that place. I want it bad, Archer. I always wanted that place. So when I found out that this widow Balestier had leased it to this Perry Hooker, instead of selling it to me, what do you think I did? I went to see this Perry Hooker one Sunday afternoon."

"What for?" queried Archer.

"You can guess what for," returned Eli. "I thought maybe he could buy the place and sell it then to me. I wanted to know about his lease. I thought perhaps this Hooker had some option in his lease to buy the house when his lease ran out. That's what for. And I'm a fool and that's what for. The thing for me to do is to leave well enough alone. Do I do it? Not much! I go to Perry Hooker on that Sunday afternoon. The dickens it is, I take my son along."

"Jonas," nodded Archer.

"Ah," proceeded Eli, "Jonas goes along with me and he meets Miss Savacool. That is the beginning of the end. Now I am a good judge of young women, and I saw her there that day, and I've got to hand it to this Miss Savacool. She is a swell looker, and she knows how to dress, and the Hookers, they give her nearly everything she wants. Treat her like their own daughter, Jonas says. But she isn't their own daughter. If she was and if I knew how much money this here Hooker had, that might make some difference. But the girl is nothing but a pauper; she's a poor relation. See."

"Suppose she is," said Archer.

"Suppose she is," echoed Eli Wintermute. "Blazes! My son Jonas wants to marry her."

"Your son Jonas," cried Archer, aghast, "he wants to marry Miss Ruth Savacool!" Archer knew Jonas as the champion fathead of the town.

"That's the idea," returned Eli Wintermute; "you're surprised, just like I am myself. Jonas sees her once, and the first time he sees her she takes him off his feet. He hasn't known her three months now, and yet he's crazy over that poor relation of a girl. Jonas says he's got no time to lose. He says that if he don't grab her up quick, somebody else'll get her. Every boy in town, he says, is crazy over that girl. Maybe so, I tell my son, but it hasn't got her anywhere. Nobody's married her so far, and yet I'm told that girl is twenty-two or -three. She's still single, ain't she? There's lots of time to think it over, I tell Jonas. But he's hell bent to marry her; he wants her right away."

"Why doesn't he marry her, then?" queried Archer.

Eli Wintermute glared at him.

"My son," he said, "marry a girl that hasn't got a red cent to her name? If Jonas was a pauper, too, it might be different; nobody could have objections to a thing like that. But my son—he's like a crazy man. So I took the matter up with Hooker."

"On your son's behalf?" asked Archer.

"On nobody's behalf," said Eli Wintermute; "I'm as cagy as the best of them, counselor. I went about it right. Not in so many words, you understand, but I put out feelers. Can you show me that this girl's got a dollar to her name? That was the substance of it that I put to Hooker. And what does Hooker tell me? Hooker tells me that she's the prettiest girl in town; he tells me she's the finest thing the Lord ever made. He tells me no man could get a better little wife. She's got all the virtues, and a whole lot more beside. Why does a girl like that need money, that's what this Hooker says. He says all this, trying to sell this girl to me—to me for my son Jonas. I give him credit, him and the missus. They're doing all they know to pass this fine girl on to the highest bidder. And I'm the highest bidder that there is in town. The hitch is, I won't bid. Does he think I am the fool I look."

"What's the upshot of the whole thing?" queried Archer.

"Can you beat it?" demanded Eli Wintermute. "I tell all this to Jonas, and still he wants this girl. He wants me to allow him to get down on his knees and propose marriage to this girl."

"Why not let him do it," suggested Archer; "maybe she'll turn him down."

"Turn him down!" echoed Eli; "turn my son Jonas down? You must think that girl is crazy, too. Counselor, maybe I look foolish, but I'm taking no such chance as that."

"How do I come in?" demanded Archer.

"You're my lawyer, you're a legislator, you're a young man and you know how young men feel. You're a bright young man. I'm here to have you tell me what's the next best move. I'm here to take advice."

Archer shook his head. "The best advice that I can give," he reiterated, "is to let Jonas propose marriage to the girl." As a matter of fact Archer felt stirring within him a healthy curiosity as to what the outcome of this plan might be. His client rose.

"That's all the advice you've got to give?" he said.

"It's all I can think of now," smiled Archer; "you know there's a sporting chance that it might get you what you want."

"A sporting chance," echoed his pluto-

cratic client; "it's a sure thing that it gets her what she wants. I'll send my son South to buy hogs for six months or so. When he gets back the young lady will be sold to some other highest bidder maybe. That's my advice to me." And he took his departure.

CHAPTER FOUR

THIS was but the beginning of things. A few months later Mrs. Godfrey Balestier sent post-haste for Youngblood. Archer saw her at the exclusive boarding-house in which she lived. She took him to her private suit, offered him a Lilliputian drop of cordial and a cigarette, and lifted up her voice in lamentation.

"Archer," she wailed, "I am the most unfortunate mother in this town. It's my son Junior. He worries me to death."

Archer suggested humorously that he would introduce into the legislature a bill preventing Junior from worrying her to death. His humor fell flat.

"You've never been a mother," the lady sharply reminded him. "I am in terrible trouble, Archer. Do you know these dreadful Hookers?"

Archer became immediately interested.

"I know the Hookers," he returned; "don't you know I know them? I engineered that lease."

The lady nodded and went on.

"Under that lease," she said, "I was required to put the house in order. It seems there was a leak I didn't fix. Archer, they called me up."

Archer forebore comment on this enormity.

"It was that woman—that Mrs. Hooker," proceeded Mrs. Balestier; "by hook or crook she made up her mind to worm herself into my acquaintance. She called me up. She wanted me to come and look. She sent her car for me. I didn't go. In an evil moment I sent Junior in my place."

"How evil was this moment?" queried Archer, feeling the influence of the cordial.

"There was a leak," went on the lady; "they showed the leak to Junior. It was an old one, one that had always troubled us. Junior came back to tell me that there was this leak, and that we should have it fixed. In an evil moment I told Junior to have McCully fix it. He went down to McCully's—he could have telephoned as well—and took McCully back to Hooker's in Hooker's car. It seems McCully soldiered on the job; at least so Junior said. And three times Junior had to go and get McCully's man, even stood over him while he did the job. Archer," said the lady ominously, "Junior went to the Hookers seven times just to get that leak attended to."

"Imposition," cried Archer indignantly, or semi-indignantly at least; "they could have done all that themselves."

"Imposition nothing," retorted Junior's mother; "it was that girl."

"What girl?" queried Archer, batting his eyes.

"That Savacool—that Ruth," returned the widow; "Archer, Junior, is infatuated with that girl."

"Don't worry," Archer soothed her; "he's not the only one."

"I gave you too much liquor, Archer," said the widow; "you have become a bit obtuse. Think! Why did the Hooker woman call me up about the leak?"

"It may have been," mused Archer, "with a sincere desire to get it fixed."

"Her desire was quite sincere," said Mrs. Balestier; "in fact, she wore her heart upon her sleeve. That Hooker woman, by hook or crook, means to ally herself to just one thing in town. That one thing is a good family. Where can she find family and blood? She finds it where it is. Next to you, Archer, I have about as much blood and family as any one in town. This Hooker woman wants me in her business. The girl is so much bait. You can't tell me that isn't her scheme."

Archer shook his head.

"On the facts, as you've detailed them, I don't quite get it all," he said. "In the first place, it is true there was a leak——"

"In the second place, there was the girl," returned the lady; "the girl is the bait, I tell you. I am a woman of ordinary percep-

tions, Archer. I use my faculties. Every function that that woman perpetuates is for this girl. The girl is her catspaw. That girl is her trump card. Almost every man in town is talking of that girl. And if the girl lands a man like Junior Balestier this Hooker woman and the girl are made for life."

Archer had mental reservations. He knew Junior well.

"And Junior," he suggested sadly, "will be ruined for eternity."

"Exactly," said the Widow Balestier. It was clear that Archer realized the situation now.

"Does Junior pay the girl attention openly?" asked Archer.

"He's over at the Hookers all the time," said Junior's mother.

"It is serious?" persisted Archer.

"Terribly so," returned the widow.

"And where," suggested Archer, "do I come in?"

It was probable that he had come in merely to be talked at. But Junior's mother manufactured an objective.

"I want to know from you," she said "just what you know about this girl?"

"I am one of her affectionate admirers," returned Archer, "but beyond the fact that she hails from a little town in Indiana I know nothing whatever of her history."

"Dear, dear," said the widow petulantly, "nobody knows anything about the girl—and I hear such dreadful things. And where there's smoke there must be fire. Let me tell you, Archer——"

Archer shook his head.

"Tell me nothing," he returned.

"I had so hoped that you might know," the widow wailed, "or, failing that, you might find out——"

"Does it signify?" queried Archer. "Is it something that you feel you ought to know?"

"Archer," cried the widow, "Junior stands on the brink of a precipice."

"Good!" nodded Archer. "Why don't you go and ask the girl?"

The lady was horrified.

"How can I ask the girl?" she demanded. "I'm not interested in the girl. But I've got to know."

Archer bucked her up.

"You're not afraid of this Mrs. Perry Hooker, are you?" he returned.

"Afraid!" echoed the widow in disdain.

"Go to it, then," said Archer; "you send for Mrs. Perry Hooker, tell her point-blank the gossip that you hear. Ask her if it's true."

The lady gasped.

"Why, that's very simple, after all," she said; "I'll do it. Archer, you're a dear."

Three days later she sent for Archer once again. Her fine eyes glistened.

"Archer," she exclaimed, gloating solemnly, "we have met the enemy and she is ours."

"I'm afraid you mean she's Junior's?" returned Archer.

"By no means," nodded Mrs. Balestier; "Archer, I sent for Mrs. Hooker. That is, I made an appointment with her in the rest room of the Green Store here in town."

Archer rose; he evinced his admiration by profound obeisance.

"You win, hands down," he said. "And did the lady come?"

"She came," went on the widow, "and I followed your directions. I asked her point-blank about the girl?"

"Did you have to tell her why?" demanded Archer.

"She knew why. She spoke about Junior—sickeningly soft it was. She said the girl was a sweet and lovely girl and would make any man a sweet and lovely wife; that the girl's personality was one in ten thousand. I cut that short, Archer. I asked her to tell me whether what I had heard was true—that the girl was nameless."

"Was—what?" demanded Archer, bridling up.

"Nameless," repeated the widow.

"Her name," said Archer, "is Ruth Savacool."

"Don't be flippant," cried the widow; "you know as well as I do what I mean. This Hooker woman changed color on the instant. She begged me not to ask her any questions about the girl. She wanted the girl judged on her own merits. She wanted me to stop. I didn't stop. I pinned her

down. I told her that my son's future and my own happiness would depend upon her answer to my question. I told her that I must have proof of this girl's parentage. Archer, she broke down and said she couldn't give me any proof. And that is all. I left her then and there."

"And now—what?" queried Archer.

"I put it up to Junior," said the widow; "I asked Junior if he married her what kind of children he expected to have."

"Of course," said Archer, shivering, "they might be all like Junior, don't you know?"

"And they might be like an unknown father—a tarnished mother, that nobody's ever seen or heard of," said the widow; "they might be anything."

"And what did Junior say?" demanded Archer.

"Junior cried," said Mrs. Godfrey Balestier.

"And will he keep his promise not to see her?" queried Archer.

"He will," returned the widow solemnly.

Archer indulged himself in a long sigh of relief.

"Thank God for that," he said.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE Hookers took Ruth Savacool for a three weeks' visit to New York. By the time they came back the legislature had adjourned. Archer Youngblood's evenings were then his own, and he determined to make good use of them. He accepted the first invitation that the Hookers sent him. He wanted to get well acquainted with this girl. His reason why? He couldn't keep away from her any longer, that was all. At ten o'clock on the fatal night he slipped from the quiet coolness of the Square into the maelstrom of one of the Hookers' big, noisy dances.

Ruth saw him the moment he made his advent. She had been waiting for him and dragged him out upon the south veranda.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come," she said.

Archer, in the intervals when Ruth danced in the close, hot-handed grip of other guests, wandered about in his lonely way, searching for some one else, male or female, who might be companionable. He knew almost everybody there. Whenever he ventured out into the open his hand was caught and shaken, somebody slapped him on the back. Joey Welcher slapped him on the back. Joey Welcher was typical of all that motley gathering. Archer methodically searched that house from top to bottom, and in all his searching he found not one merry-maker of his own kind. These people were not his people, not by a jugful. Mrs. Perry Hooker may have cast her hooks far and wide; if so she had hooked in vain. It didn't seem to worry her. She was distinctly in her own element, and so was Perry Hooker. This was raw stuff, it seemed to Archer, to feed this pretty girl. Of all the youngsters gathered here to meet Ruth Savacool, Archer wouldn't have taken one of them to a dog fight. At least, that was the way things seemed to him. Perry Hooker felt the other way. He assured Archer that he and the missus were giving Ruth her pick of the very best in town. Archer was honestly surprised at Hooker's lack of judgment. These men were the poorest lot of bounders in the town: cheap politicians, slithery State House hangers-on. He couldn't understand it. He wondered vaguely why. As the night wore on he gave up wondering. He spent his time with Ruth, snatched her boldly from the multitude, regardless of her duties, and kept her for himself.

"I don't care," said Ruth happily and a bit defiantly.

"I do," said Youngblood.

He was the last man to leave the house. And as he went he felt upon him the strangely curious, perhaps even hopeful, glances of three people whom he didn't understand. Perry Hooker and his wife were two of these. And Joey Welcher was the third.

Archer didn't stop. In fact he felt he couldn't stop. Next day he whisked Ruth in his coupé out to a suburban halfway house, took her in to dinner, and lazed through back lanes toward home with her

in the moonlight. Two nights later he fetched her flowers and candy. Three nights after that he brought her half a dozen books that she said she wanted most to read. From thenceforth there could be no mistaking his intentions. He courted her openly and earnestly and all the time.

It was at a critical stage of his courtship that Joey Welcher invited him one day to lunch. There was that in Joey's manner that impelled Archer to accept the invitation. They reached the Downtown Club a trifle late; the grill was practically deserted. Joey piloted his aristocratic guest to a table in an out-of-the-way corner.

"Assemblyman," said Joey Welcher, "I'm going to tell you something that you won't like to hear."

"Go as far as you like," smiled Archer, wondering.

"There's only one reason why I'm going to tell you this," went on Joey, "and that's because you're entitled to a square deal from the Hookers and from me. You've always been square with me. I've got to be the same with you. This," he proceeded, "is about a girl."

"About Ruth Savacool," said Archer. He was a bit flustered, though.

"I'm going to be frank with you," went on Joey; "I tried my level best to hitch up with Ruth. Just as she is, I stand ready any day to marry her. No thoroughfare, assemblyman. She just plain won't have me; there the matter ends. That girl knows exactly what she is about."

"I have already come to that conclusion," nodded Archer.

"Assemblyman," said Joey, "that girl knows that she's got to rise above her station. I'm not saying she'd marry for anything but love, you understand. I'm saying that she's mighty careful not to let herself fall in love with a man that doesn't fill the bill. She's waited this long time for Mister Right One to come along. Remember, this is man to man. Do you mind my going on?"

"I'm intensely interested," responded Archer.

"We'll say that Mister Right One has come along; he's in this room right now," nodded Joey. "If I know Ruth Savacool, and I think I do, I know the signs. Assemblyman, thou art the man."

Archer made it his business to seem pleased.

"I trust I am," he returned in fervent tones.

"That," said Joey, "is why it's all the more the pity——"

He stopped short. Clearly he hesitated.

"Go on," said Archer, "you've got something on your mind."

"Man to man," said Joey Welcher, "I ask you fair and square whether you've heard any gossip about Ruth Savacool."

"I have not," lied Archer firmly. "What gossip has there been?" All this really bored him. He wanted to get over with it swiftly.

"Many kinds," proceeded Joey, "but I can assure you right now that Ruth didn't come out of a charity school, and I can assure you that she's all that's good. You can stake your bottom dollar upon that."

"We set up the domino to knock it down again," chuckled Archer, but he was worried nevertheless.

"By gorry," went on Joey in a doleful tone of voice, "it would be better if she were a nameless pauper. Nobody would have a claim upon her then. But now——"

He stopped again, much as a man stops on the verge of a precipice. Archer stared at him.

"I suppose you know," said Archer, "that you're keeping me in suspense?"

Joey shook his head.

"Nobody knows it better than I do," he said, "and nobody realizes more than I do that there's no blood in this commonwealth that's better blood than yours. I know what you think of your ancestors, all right. And I've got to tell you, here and now, that Ruth Savacool came of vastly different kind of stock. Look here," he blurted out, "I can't go on. I'm not going to tell you any more. You want to know who Ruth's father is. That's why I brought you here to tell you." He fumbled for a moment in his pocket. He produced a small sealed envelope. He handed the envelope to Archer.

"The murder's out," cried Joey; "you can read it for yourself."

Archer seized the envelope and tore it open. A card fell out—a printed card. This was the inscription: "Abel Savacool, State Executioner."

"Until recently the public hangman," said Joey Welcher. Joey's face was pale. There was apprehension in his eyes, as though he feared a blow.

"Great Jehoshaphat!" cried Archer.

"It's a rocky situation," nodded Joey.

"Have you ever seen this man?" cried Archer.

"I never have," said Joey.

"You never want to," exclaimed Archer, shuddering. "I've seen him once, and once is once too much, I tell you that. Welcher," he queried sharply, "who knows this fact?"

"Perry Hooker, Mrs. Perry Hooker, Ruth," said Joey, "and don't, for heaven's sake, tell any one of 'em I told you. If Perry finds it out he'll knife me in the back. Mrs. Perry will feed me slow poison. Ruth will—she'll hang me while I sleep. Assemblyman, I give you my word, if it had been anybody else, I'd have kept my mouth shut. It's just that you are you, you understand."

"I understand," returned Archer slowly, "that you've done me yeoman's service, Welcher. I'm wondering now just what to do."

"You haven't gone too far with Ruth to stop?" asked Joey.

Archer caught him by the arm.

"I've got it, Welcher," he exclaimed. "I want you to take a message for me to the house. Tell 'em all three, Perry, Mrs. Perry and the girl, that I've been called away upon a business trip; that I met you; that I had no time to telephone to them. I'll make it true. I'll go this afternoon. I won't be back for ten whole days. That will give me time to think things over; it'll help to—to sever the relations, as it were. It will ease things down. When I get back I can still be as busy as I please."

Archer was as good as his word. He left town that afternoon. Within a week, however, he was back. When he got back he called up Perry Hooker at the latter's office.

"Perry," he said confidentially over the wire, "if you can spare the time, I want you to come over to my office right away. Do me a favor. Keep this request and this engagement absolutely to yourself."

"What's the general idea?" queried Perry Hooker in tones of some surprise.

"You're the only man," said Archer, "who can confirm a bit of gossip that I heard before I went away."

"You've got me guessing," chuckled Perry, "but I'll be with you right away."

CHAPTER SIX

INSIDE of five minutes Hooker came swinging gaily into Archer's office. Archer welcomed him warmly, placed a chair for him, and shut the door.

"Perry," said Archer, "don't ask me any questions, please. I decline to tell you where I got this information, and you can't guess the source of it in a thousand years. My informant is reliable, but, to tell the honest truth, my informant is not reliable enough. I've got to have confirmation of the thing from you."

"Shoot," said Perry Hooker.

"Now, see here," went on Archer, "the information that I have received is that Ruth Savacool is the daughter of a man named Abel Savacool, the public hangman. I want to know from you whether that is true."

Perry Hooker stiffened.

"Archer," he cried, "I want to know who told you that."

"And I," repeated Archer, "must know whether it is true."

"Tell me who told you first," demanded Hooker.

"No," returned Archer.

"Yes," persisted Perry Hooker.

They were at a deadlock. Archer Youngblood thought it over.

"The case is desperate," he said to Perry; "will you promise to keep confidential anything I tell you now?"

"Agreed. Shoot," said Hooker.

"Your nephew, Joey Welcher, was my informant," faltered Archer.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Hooker, "will that lad never know enough to hold his tongue?"

"Is this thing true?" demanded Archer.

Perry Hooker blinked his eyes. "Do you mean to tell me," he returned, "that my nephew told you that Ruth is the daughter of the public hangman? All right, take my advice. Tell Joey he's a liar, and let it go at that."

"I decline to let it go at that," said Archer; "there's too much here at stake. You are in position to know whether what he says is true or false. I have a right to know from you."

Hooker thought about it.

"I decline to tell you," he returned.

"Great guns!" cried Archer, "I have some right to know about this girl. You know whether this is true or false. Do you deny that she's the daughter of the public hangman here in town."

Hooker hesitated; his hesitation seemed painful.

"I deny nothing, Archer," he finally returned.

"That," nodded Archer, "is all I want to know. Now, Hooker," he went on, "man to man, as your nephew Joey says, I'll tell you what I did after Joey had given me this information. I did, I think, the only thing that a man in my position could have done. I went away to think."

"The only thing," said Perry.

"All that I knew about Ruth Savacool, save that one important fact as to her parentage, was that she came from a little town in Indiana," went on Archer, "and so I went on my business trip to that little town in Indiana, and I found out things about Ruth Savacool."

Perry Hooker's cigar had gone out. He relit it.

"What did you find out?" he said at length.

"I found," returned Archer, "that Ruth Savacool had been brought up in a boarding school out there. I found at that boarding school that both her parents were said to have died in her infancy. I confirmed that later, my friend."

"Confirmed it—how?" demanded Hooker.

Archer tossed two documents across the desk.

"One of those," he said, "is the marriage certificate of Ruth's mother and her father. The other is the birth certificate of Ruth, their only child. I find no mystery at all about Ruth in that little town. I find that her father's name was Philip and not Abel Savacool."

Hooker stirred in his seat.

"Interesting," he said at length.

"Therefore," nodded Archer, "I was driven to the inevitable conclusion that Ruth was not the daughter of a hangman—see?"

"I hear you say it," nodded Perry Hooker.

"That mystery was cleared up," went on Archer, "but another mystery remained. Eli Wintermute consulted me some time ago about his son. You know Jonas Wintermute—you know that he's a decent young man. You know that he's a rich man's son. You told Eli Wintermute that Ruth Savacool was a pauper."

"You didn't hear me tell him that," said Hooker.

"Let me go on," said Archer. "Mrs. Godfrey Balestier told me later about Junior. She saw your wife. Your wife confirmed a rumor that Ruth Savacool was nothing but a nameless child."

"You didn't hear my wife say that," said Hooker.

"I accepted an invitation to your house," said Archer, "and from what I saw I was driven to another conclusion—that only by chance would Ruth Savacool ever meet any man she felt she'd like to marry. Later I became infatuated with the girl. I'm infatuated with her still. I am a man of wealth, of social, political, and professional standing in this town. So far as I can judge myself, I am comparatively unobjectionable. I would make a fair match for Ruth. She wouldn't marry Joel Welcher. Joey was in the family; you were willing that he should marry her. You were willing she should marry Joel Welcher. But you met every other man whose attentions might be serious with rumors that discredited the

girl from the word go. On the face of things you were exploiting her; on the face of things you gave her every opportunity to marry. Secretly you undermined her reputation. When I made my advent you played the trump card of a clever and resourceful trickster. You took immediate advantage of a singular occurrence and of a not unusual coincidence. You are a psychologist par excellence. I shall never forget that abomination who sat then where you sit now as long as I live."

Perry Hooker lit a cigarette.

"It was up to me to solve the mystery," nodded Archer. "Why did you do these things? Where lay the motive. I soon found out. This girl's grandfather was a Hoosier of distinction. He had been for many years judge of an appellate court in Indiana. His name is in the law reports. He was an austere man, but a man of parts. And something more—he owned most of the town wherein he lived and a considerable section of the surrounding countryside. He died rich, Hooker—and he left a will."

Hooker cast his cigarette aside and lit another. Archer tossed another document in front of Hooker. Hooker never even glanced at it.

"In and by that will," said Archer, "the old man gave his entire estate to his granddaughter, Ruth Savacool, for and during her natural life. During her life she was to get the income. Upon her death the fee was devised and bequeathed to her lawful issue. So far so good," said Archer; "the old man's only other living relative was your wife, a distant relative of Ruth's. So he provided that if Ruth died without leaving lawful issue your wife would take the fee. That solved the mystery. If Ruth married and had lawful issue, your wife would lose the fee. Anything might happen to Ruth Savacool if she didn't marry. She might die young. That was always possible. What was sure was this: so long as Ruth didn't marry, she would live with you and Mrs. Perry Hooker and your nephew Joey, and all of you could live upon the income. If she marries your prosperity is at an end. Ergo, never let her marry and worry her to death."

"You've got it all doped out, haven't you?" smiled Perry Hooker.

"I'm going to marry Ruth Savacool if she'll have me," said Archer.

"Now," sneered Perry, "that you know she's rich."

"I proposed to her some weeks ago," said Archer, "before I had the facts. I haven't had her answer yet."

"What's the delay?" queried Hooker.

"My surmise is," said Archer, "that she doesn't want to foist on me the Perry Hookers and their relatives and friends, but I can overcome that once I'm married to her."

"Oh, you can, can you?" demanded Hooker. "How?"

"By filing a little bill in equity against you, Hooker, for an accounting for all her income that you've handled up to date. The decree will direct you to pay over to her all that you haven't spent strictly for her account. And if you haven't got it and can't comply with the decree, you go to jail. That is, if you're still in town, you'll go to jail."

"What is your present move?" demanded Perry.

"First," said Archer, "I'm going to tell Ruth just how and why the Perry Hookers have been slandering her."

"She won't believe you when you tell her," returned Hooker.

Archer smiled. "Probably," he said, "she knows all about it now." He stepped across the room. "Ruth!" he exclaimed.

And Ruth Savacool, her face white, shocked, stepped out from behind the big screen that graced Archer's office. Perry Hooker leaped to his feet.

"For shame!" cried Perry Hooker, glaring at Archer; "I didn't think a man like you would descend to trickery like this."

Still glaring, he strode indignantly across the floor, jerked the door open and disappeared, leaving Ruth Savacool and Archer Youngblood to face the future all alone.

The Dips' Device

By ROBERT RUSSELL

CREITON crossed his long legs and watched the smoke wreaths of his cigar float upward in the still air of his quiet office. He was tall and thin; his eyes were honest, intense. He took every one seriously except, possibly, himself. Creiton was a lawyer by profession with a fondness for solving problems presented in the commission of crime. Perhaps that was why he liked to watch the twisting, floating smoke-wreaths—they were so distorted. The criminal mind was like that, he believed—distorted. And yet the law of cause and effect worked there, too, making almost mathematically precise deductions possible.

It was long after office hours, and yet the knock which came at his door did not surprise him.

"Come in," he said, looking up a bit reproachfully at the smoke line that had taken an unexpected twist.

He had not turned on the lights, and that was the reason, perhaps, why the entrance of the woman who opened and entered hesitatingly seemed a bit dramatic. Creiton rose instantly, apologizing for the smoke which filled the room.

"I scarcely hoped to find you still here," she said in a quiet, restrained voice. "But I am very glad. This is Mr. Creiton?"

He moved to turn on the lights, but she halted him with a gesture.

"Please, Mr. Creiton, don't do that—just for a few minutes. The truth is—so silly, I know—I have been crying. Please let me tell you about the trouble. Perhaps you can help me."

She seated herself as he moved a chair forward for her, while Creiton resumed his place before his desk.

"Anything I can do?" he asked seriously.

"I will be unwomanlike—and brief," she went on, and in the dimness of the room it was only the inflection of her voice that told Creiton she was young, attractive. "I am the owner of the Knickerbilt Theatre," she went on, "where vaudeville is presented."

"I have enjoyed the performances there," said Creiton.

"Every dollar I have is in that theatre," she continued. "My only income is from it. I tell you this so that you will understand why I am worried by what happened night before last," she went on after a moment's pause; "two pickpockets were arrested in the theatre. They were caught in the act of stealing pocketbooks. I would have thought little of that, of course, had it not been for what has come after."

It was evident she was having difficulty in speaking calmly. Again Creiton felt that the darkness of the room accentuated the intensity of the situation.

"After the performance, night before last, several men stopped at the box-office and complained that they, too, had been robbed," she went on. "And yesterday and to-day, all day, the telephone has been ringing and patrons of the theatre have reported other losses."

"You have talked to the police?" asked Creiton.

"Of course, and they tell me it is nothing but a coincidence that so many 'dips,' as they call the pickpockets, were at work in my theatre night before last—and last night."

"Again—last night?" queried Creiton, leaning forward in his renewed interest.

"The same thing again last night," she

went on. "Can't you see what it will mean when the newspapers get the story? The theatre will be blacklisted; no one will come."

"Not even out of curiosity?" suggested Creiton.

"I had thought of that," she replied. "Possibly it would be almost a good advertisement for some theatres. The people might come just out of curiosity. But I don't want that sort of people. Perhaps you know the character of our patrons?"

"High-brow," smiled Creiton, "of course. Evening dress and all that sort of thing. The wealthy people of the city go to your house."

"And I have thought," she continued, "that it was because my patrons are wealthy the pickpockets selected my theatre for their operations. But this concerted action—I can't understand it. To sum it up," she added, "either the class of people who come to the Knickerbilt will change completely, for the worse, if I may say so, or else the patronage will fall off. The people who have patronized my show house are not the sort who want to be disturbed in their comfortable enjoyment by a gang of pickpockets, no matter how much excitement they would produce."

The darkness had fallen completely now, and again Creiton moved toward the electric switch.

"Yes," came her voice, "I don't mind the light now; it really doesn't seem so terrible since I have talked about it."

The lights blazed out. For the first time Creiton saw the young woman almost as he had pictured her. But the hat she wore was much more pleasing to the eye than he had fancied, the glance she gave him much more appealing and the black hair which showed just a little below the dainty ears was much more enticing than had been the imagined look, the hair.

"I ought to add," she resumed, "that the receipts of the next week or so are most important. That is why it means so much to me to prevent any falling off of patronage just now. My mother is an invalid. She will have a long journey with extra expenses. A night's receipts are so important. I——"

"Please," interrupted Creiton, "don't go on—I understand."

She looked her relief as he turned away, thinking. One theft meant little, of course. The police, with their practical drag-net, were effective. But this co-operative crime, this campaign against the patrons of this one theatre? It was a pretty problem. He turned to her again.

"None of those who reported losses to you had any idea when their pockets were ransacked, I suppose?" he asked.

"None of them. They were sure only that the loss had come while the performance was going on."

"Was there any one thing about the reports that was common to all of them?" came his question.

"Just that they had all lost pocketbooks, Mr. Creiton. That is all."

He leaned forward quickly. His question came straight upon the heels of her reply.

"Tell me, how many acts are there on the program?" he asked. "And describe them."

"There are nine. First an opening sketch, quiet, not exciting, but really very good. Then"—she went on, catching some hint of his aroused interest in the deepened intensity of his eyes—"then a 'sister act,' good, rather unusually sweet."

"And then," he prompted.

"Some eccentric dancing, with a darkened house; I had wondered about the darkened house; perhaps that gave the pickpockets the chance."

"Were the two arrests made before that time night before last?" he asked quickly.

"No, afterwards," she answered. "So that destroys that theory."

"Too obvious, anyway," he murmured. "Go on, please."

She continued her description of the performance, describing each act minutely, answering his occasional questions clearly and with quick-witted understanding.

He made no comment until she reached the seventh number on the program. Before describing it she paused a moment as

though renewing again in her own mind the sequence of events.

"Zanco, the magician," she said slowly, "who appears just before ten o'clock, made the hit of the evening."

Creiton's voice was low as he encouraged her in what, to her, must have been a wearisome recital.

"Zanco, the magician, interests me," he said. "Tell me about him."

"He is not a hypnotist at all," she replied, "but he seems to have a powerful hold over the spectators. They are intensely interested even in his card tricks with which he begins his act. His sleight-of-hand is really marvellous."

"And who is Zanco? I think I never heard of him."

"He is a new man in vaudeville," she replied. "I saw him work, of course, before I engaged him. His act is a head-liner, however."

"After the card tricks?" queried Creiton.

"There is nothing especially new at all about his act," the girl went on, "but the impressive way he performs his tricks seems to make even the old one where he puts a girl in a big basket, closes the lid, and then has her seem to reappear at the top of the theatre in another basket, quite like something new. I don't remember seeing it before, but I am told Hermann did this many years ago."

"Of course he has two girls?"

"Yes. The one who comes from the top of the theatre and slides down a wire to the stage goes into that basket long before the performance begins. The other one, whom he closes in the basket on the stage, drops through a false bottom and through a trap-door in the floor of the stage. It is quite simple, but the girls are made up to look just alike, and the thing seems to mystify the audience for a while."

"And I suppose," half mused Creiton, "that the spectators follow these girls with their eyes all the time. I suppose the magician makes his greatest hit with this act?"

"Yes; the house is absolutely still," she responded. "He speaks in a low, gentle voice; his manner is perfect; it is a real hit."

Creiton rose and walked to the window. The darkness seemed to offer no solution to a problem which seemed simple, but which might develop if the imagination were allowed to follow the twisted path of that criminal mind which was of such interest to him.

"Have you any idea," he asked, "how much money was stolen in the two nights?"

"Nearly ten thousand dollars," was her reply. "You see, the men who come to the theatre are rich. I have kept track of the amounts as the losses were reported to me. I think there were one hundred and six thefts. Several of the men had large amounts of money in their pocketbooks."

"And pocketbooks only were stolen," Creiton repeated. "Do you mind," he went on, apparently irrelevantly, "if I smoke?"

She smilingly signified her permission and Creiton lighted one of his small cigars. The smoke rose slowly, and his eyes followed the twisting lines of filmy gray. Now he seated himself once more, but his eyes were upon the smoke lines drifting upward. Soon just the hint of a little smile came to his face. He seemed to see something up there where the smoke lay close to the ceiling, and the sight brought satisfaction. The next question he asked the girl was a simple one, but something suggested that his interest was intense as he awaited her reply.

"When the girl slides down from the ceiling," he began, "it doesn't happen, does it, that she comes from the left-hand side of the house—the left-hand as one looks at the stage?"

"Why, yes," was her answer.

For just a moment he was silent, then, a little embarrassed as though realizing that he had been in a dream of theory, he rose and came toward his client.

"I've a notion I understand the situation," he said. "Please arrange to have everything at the theatre to-night just as it has been. Do not have any extra detail of policemen there, and don't let them arrest any one on suspicion before the performance. I think, honestly, that I can help you out."

"Oh, if you only can," exclaimed the girl.

"The curtain goes up in about an hour or so?"

"At eight-thirty."

He glanced at his watch. "Seven o'clock now," he said. "Do have a good dinner, and," he added with that delicate understanding which showed he had not forgotten her personal worry, "please believe that there will be no loss in the receipts at your house to-night. If we have good luck the business will end right away—the criminal business, I mean."

"I don't see how you can prevent them from doing what they did last night and the night before, Mr. Creiton," said the girl, a little eagerly, a little doubtingly.

"Preventing its recurrence would be only half a victory," replied Creiton. "We want to get all the thieves—and the money they have taken."

"If you only could!"

"And we would like to do it in an artistic way," he went on, smiling again. "Yours is an artistic theatre, you see," he added.

She turned to the door as he moved in that direction, and it was evident that her talk with the man had relieved her mind. She was smiling almost hopefully as she listened to his last question.

"This is Saturday," he said. "I suppose you pay the performers to-night?"

"Yes, before the performance," she replied. "I prefer to do it that way rather than to wait until after the show, as most managers do."

"I am glad I happened to ask that question," was Creiton's comment as she passed from the office and disappeared.

The detective stepped quickly back into his room and called a number over the telephone. He asked the person whom he got on the wire to call at his own rooms in half an hour. Then he locked the office door and hurried away, using a waiting taxi to aid him in his evident haste. At his rooms he changed to evening clothes. The fact that he was in the middle of his toilet when his Jap servant announced a caller did not bother Creiton in the slightest. He received the visitor in his dressing-room and talked as he adjusted his tie.

That visitor was a small man about whom there was nothing especially noticeable except his eyes and forehead. The latter was far too large to be natural; the former were almost as intense as were those of Creiton himself. There would be no need of repeating directions given to a man possessing those eyes. Their expression indicated that every word Creiton spoke sank deep and was nailed down, ready to refer to.

At a quarter before eight o'clock Creiton was ordering a rather hearty dinner at a fashionable restaurant. Brain work had the same effect upon him that manual labor has upon the worker with his hands. When he believed that brain exercise had produced something that was satisfactory Creiton indulged his appetite. When he was still floundering with a problem he was apt to fast for a day at a time.

He entered the Knickerbilt Theatre just as the curtain was going up on the opening sketch and took a seat which he purchased at the box-office. It was far to the rear, but from it he could get a good view of the audience.

It was a typical audience for the Knickerbilt. The men were in evening dress and the women looked as though they had just come from a dinner party. Here and there were men apparently alone, but there was not the slightest evidence that anything was amiss. Evidently the news of the wholesale pickpocketing that had been going on for two nights in that theatre had failed to impress the newspaper reporters, for there had been no comment made upon the fact.

Creiton's eyes were not upon the stage. Act after act was shown, and nothing developed. He had been watching the movements of the people about him rather than the actions of those upon the stage. The detective was quiet, intent seemingly upon his own thoughts.

About nine o'clock he left his seat and went out into the lobby. There he met the little man with a very large forehead and intent eyes. Only a nod passed between them, and then Creiton returned to his seat.

It was just before ten o'clock when the curtain went up to disclose the handsome "set" of Zanco, the magician. The orchestra was playing a low, rather doleful melody written in a minor key. No one appeared

upon the stage for several minutes. The chords of the instruments grew fainter and fainter, and as the last echo died out the magician appeared.

Zanco's face was white, his eyes startlingly black. Straight, shiny black hair, worn long, was brushed back from his forehead.

Each movement he made was graceful, and as he came forward to the footlights, the approval of the audience seemed to rise, hesitate, and then surge forward gently, enveloping the man in friendliness. Before he had spoken a word the spectators were ready to applaud his efforts.

"A magician is a bore," he began, smiling softly, quite as though he appreciated the fact that he was addressing a discriminating audience, "unless he throws about his tricks an atmosphere of the 'different.' This I shall try to do." His voice, even more than his persuasive manner, soothed, bringing relief to those who heard him and who had "seen everything in the world worth seeing. As he went on he took a pack of cards from the table and held them before him, quite as a concert singer of perfect presence holds her fan. "This very ordinary pack of cards, for instance," he said, "represents to a lot of you many hours of boredom, although you have also enjoyed playing. But when I take this pack of very commonplace cards and weave about them some fantastic tale which brings before your imagination's eyes a story of romance and mystery, they assume new interest. You close your eyes contentedly, and when you open them again you see, instead of that pack of cards, a lace handkerchief which might well have been held before the charming face of some princess of the olden times."

And as the spectators watched, fascinated, he drew his hands apart, and there fell to the stage the daintiest bit of lace imaginable, while the cards were not to be seen.

On through almost half an hour of illusions and sleight-of-hand he proceeded, his attractive voice continuing its winning appeal. The eyes of the members of the audience followed him everywhere as he crossed and re-crossed the stage. Occasionally he remained silent as though to make them miss the music of his voice.

It was after one of these silences that he introduced to the spectators a dainty little maiden garbed in the dress of the Far East. Leading her forward, quite as though she were a princess of royal blood, he told his hearers a fanciful story of her lonely childhood in a far-off country where mysticism reigned and where dreams were deep and sweet and wonderful. He told of her delicacy, her love of soft music and wondrous sunsets. He asked them all to look into her eyes and see there the unfathomable story of youth longing for love and life and, finding it not, resting back content to dream of what would some day come.

When he had finished her white hand dropped slowly from his, and she glided to one side of the stage. There she stood alone, a picture made vivid by the seductive description of her heart that the man had painted. Every eye was upon her. The magician was quite forgotten. He had thrown such an atmosphere of interest about the girl that it seemed as though those in the audience were trying to read her thoughts. His work had been a masterpiece of delicate acting, its aim to make this little lady of mystery the centre of attraction.

She moved now to the centre of the stage and stood beside a curiously wrought basket as he approached her, bowing gracefully. He spoke no word as he raised the light affair in his hands, turning it about so that all might see the inside. There was no false bottom, nothing to cover her after she would disappear inside. Then he raised from the stage an oriental rug and turned it silently this way and that, to show its solid texture. He laid the rug upon the stage, making the commonplace action seem a ceremony to be performed for the honor of a queen. Upon the rug he placed the basket, and then, without a word, the girl stepped gracefully over its side and lowered herself from view, while the man gently closed the lid.

"I will not follow the example of performers who have bungled an experiment somewhat like this achievement of ours," he said, his voice soft, gentle, "and thrust

swords through the basket to show that she has already gone. I know the natures of the people to whom I am speaking. The act would be repulsive to you. But I will ask you all to remember the look in her eyes, the bright sunlight of her hair, the deep blue of her eyes; I will ask you all to remember her as she stood before you but a moment ago. And I will not insult your intelligence by intimating that you would not know her again."

He paused just a moment. Not a sound could be heard. The low voice, tense, at times thrilling, had brought a hush that was a splendid compliment to him. "You would know her again among a hundred," he went on, moving slowly forward toward the footlights." Again he paused. Again came the hush. His hearers were eager to see once more the girl of whom he had talked.

Slowly he raised his hand straight before him. He leaned forward slightly, pointing out into the centre of the house.

And then, like a clap of sharp thunder, his voice cried out, loud, startling.

"And there she is," he called, raising his arm and pointing to the ceiling at the left side of the house as the spectators faced the stage.

Every head was turned instantly. Everybody shifted. All eyes, compelled by his sudden change from gentle whisperings to a shouting command, turned upward, and all thoughts were of the figure that appeared there rising from a basket suspended from the ceiling.

Then, just as suddenly, far more compelling than had been the magician's high-pitched command, came another order, deep, resonant, penetrating—an order that the subconscious mind decreed must be obeyed. It was in Creiton's voice.

"No," came the powerful, compelling syllable, "she is here."

Again heads turned, drawn irresistibly by the words. But now men and women gazed into a box at the other side of the house. From there the second command had come. They saw the tall, thin man in evening dress leaning over the railing of that box. They saw intense eyes, burning obedience into their minds.

"It is a trick," Creiton went on quickly. "Obey me. Every man seize the man on his right, if he is a stranger. Pickpockets are at work; they have taken this second when all your eyes were turned upward and away from this side of the house, the side in which are the pockets of men's dinner coats where they usually carry their pocketbooks. Take care of yourselves."

Now his words were lost in the commotion that ensued. From the rear of the theatre came a rushing platoon of policemen. They lined the aisles. All over the house men and women were struggling.

"I've got one," came the cry of a man near the front.

"Here's another," cried a second.

"Here, too—and here," the shouts rose.

Creiton leaped to the stage from the box into which he had stepped quietly at the proper moment. Down the wire from the ceiling came a girl—a replica of the mysterious one who had posed so prettily. Zanco, the magician, was standing majestically at the rear of the stage. Creiton spoke quietly to him.

"I would hate to spoil the artistic picture," he said. "Let me see you do some more acting; quiet them while the police take your accomplices away. Your game is over, but you are artist enough to make the finish dramatic. Let's see what you will do."

Just a flash of understanding passed between the two men—the criminal and the detective interested in the twistings of gray smoke-wreaths and the distorted minds of the world. Then, hand raised, Zanco, the magician, stepped to the front of the stage.

"A great man has just complimented me. I never saw him before; perhaps I shall never see him again. As a last act in my somewhat dramatic life I should like to tell my friend out there"—and he glanced into the aisles where the police were guarding some of the pickpockets that had been caught in the act of trying to take the pocketbooks of the men sitting on the left of each—"I should like to tell my friends," he repeated, addressing these accomplices of his, "that the co-operative committee, of

which I am chairman, will go out of business, and they, its members, had better take their medicine."

He backed slowly away toward the centre of the stage, bowing gracefully. Suddenly he gave a leap and disappeared from view. The stage was empty save for Creiton and the poor forlorn "princess" who had slid down the wire from the ceiling of the theatre.

A great cry rose, but Creiton stood smiling, a bit embarrassed. Shouts of "Catch him" came from every side.

"Wait," he said. "Just a moment, please."

He pulled the basket away from the place where it had been standing, stooped and pulled open the trapdoor through which Zanco had dropped, and in a moment was assisting the disheveled "magician" to his humiliated feet. He hauled him up to view.

"You see," said Creiton quietly, "I wanted him to try this get-away trick; it's almost a confession."

A little man with intense eyes stuck his head up through the trapdoor. It was a big head, the forehead prominent.

"You see, Mr. Creiton," he said, "I was waiting for him like you told me to."

PARISIAN DETECTIVES

SOME interesting information respecting the Paris detective police has been given by M. Valbel in his book on the Surete, which is in reality a series of biographies of the principal members of the force. The Police de Surete must be distinguished from the Surete Generale, which is really the "political police force" acting under the orders of the Minister of the Interior, and in a most secret manner.

The Police de Surete, on the other hand, is a body, the members of which look for their orders to the Prefect of Police, or Cabinet du Prefect, and perform their duties openly and without any of that impenetrable mystery which envelops the proceedings of the ministerial myrmidons.

The Dogberry of the Surete could not, in fact, pursue his investigations without making himself known, generally speaking, although, when following up a clew in a criminal case, he does not disdain to adopt the disguise which is supposed to be permanently used by extra clever detectives of "blood and thunder fiction." The ordinary "plain-clothes man" rejoices in the high-sounding designation of Inspector, and has as his respective chiefs the Sub-Brigadier, the Brigadier, and the Principal Inspector.

This force was first founded by the famous Vidocq in 1832, when it only comprised thirty-one men, to whom were added fourteen "outsiders," who were called indicateurs. In 1848 the body was increased to 160 men, being afterward reduced to sixty, until it was at last brought up to its present redoubtable number of hundreds of Inspectors, who are directed by a chief. He has under him on the staff one chief clerk, who acts as his principal deputy or "understudy," other clerks or secretaries, chief inspectors, brigadiers and sub-brigadiers.

The detective inspectors are attached to sections, such as the special brigade of picked men, the Department of Information and warrants, that of Requisitions or "Searches," the Pawn Offices, the Streets. There is also another important section, that of the Center of Permanence, to which belong the detectives told off for various eventualities.

During a period of fifty-seven years, the Surete had twelve chiefs, of whom the best known, not including Vidocq, was Claude, whose memoirs obtained a world-wide reputation. In later times, M. Mace, another head of the Detective Department, has published his experience in the famous force, and has therein ventilated various theories about its failings and shortcomings. Notwithstanding such criticism the French Surete maintains a high character for efficiency, and its victories have been by no means inconsiderable during recent years.

Just Some Smoke

By DALE D. KIER

DETECTIVE SERGEANT JAMES BRONSON walked into the presence of his chief one bright summer morning in answer to a summons.

Chief Raynor had sent for Bronson to give him another assignment—and a difficult one.

"Sit down, sergeant," the chief requested after the usual greetings had been exchanged.

He was a large man of middle age, with pleasing features, keen dark eyes and iron-gray hair.

Bronson was the chief's junior by a score of years, of medium build, dark complexion, firm, square chin and eyes that gazed steadily beneath half-closed lids.

"I want you to take up this Bardell case," the chief began.

Bronson started. "I thought Rexton had that job," he observed.

"He had, but I've called him off," the chief stated. "He wasn't getting anywhere. It's two weeks to-day since Bardell disappeared, and not a trace of him has been found. It's very strange and—very serious, I fear," the chief added soberly.

"You suspect foul play?" Bronson questioned.

The chief nodded.

"Bardell has either been made away with or he is being kept a prisoner. I presume you are familiar with the main facts of the case," he went on. "Bardell had been after the counterfeiters, and was hot on their trail. From some words he let fall I'm inclined to think he had the gang's den located, and was ready to nab the whole bunch, when he disappeared. Bardell was a good sleuth," the chief continued, "but he was a little too close-mouthed for his own safety. He wanted to run down his case single-handed without help. I fear that very trait was his undoing. If he had given some of us an inkling as to where he was going or what he intended to do, we would have known where to look for him. But he left us all in the dark. And now, Bronson, I'm going to tell you frankly that you are much like Bardell in one respect. You keep everything to yourself. It may be all right sometimes, but sometimes it isn't. So I'm going to warn you that before you take any risks in this matter you had better let me know your intentions. I don't want any more missing men mysteries."

"Thanks, chief, I'll remember," Bronson promised. "Counterfeiters been active lately?"

"A Tenth street merchant found a bogus ten-dollar bill in his cash when he was preparing to take it to the bank for deposit yesterday evening. One of the clerks had accepted it during the day, but as several bills of that denomination had been taken in, it could not be traced. The finding of the bill is proof that the gang is still busy, however. And now, Bronson," the chief concluded, "this case is in your hands. The last seen of Bardell he was walking down Oak street. Where did he go? What became of him? I believe you can solve the mystery if any one can."

Ten minutes later Detective Sergeant James Bronson was in the street. As he walked along he went carefully over in his mind the facts of this case. What had become of Detective Horace Bardell? That was the question. Bardell had last been seen on Oak street. Perhaps it was this thought that impelled Bronson to turn his steps in that direction.

Oak street ran through the heart of the finest residence section of the town. Bronson passed many palatial houses set in the midst of magnificent grounds. He had walked several blocks, admiring the well-kept lawns with their velvet-like coverings of short, green grass, when something fell fluttering at his feet. He stooped and picked it up, and an exclamation fell from his lips. Sheltering the object in the palm of his hand, he stared hard at it, as if unable to believe his eyes. Where had it come from? Not from any of those neat lawns, where the smallest scrap of rubbish was unknown. He suddenly remembered that it had come fluttering downward, as if it had fallen from above. He raised his eyes, and in a moment his gaze became focused on the house just ahead.

It was a large house and very irregular in shape because of many ells and additions which had been built on the original two-storied structure. Several tall chimneys rose from different parts of the roof, and Bronson's eye was attracted by a line of light-colored smoke curling from one of them.

Ordinarily he would have attached no importance to such a common sight as smoke coming out of a chimney, but there was something about this particular case which struck him as being peculiar. The smoking chimney was not over the kitchen region, but was near the centre of the building, a little to the south perhaps; a fireplace likely, and some one burning an accumulation of old papers, but——

Again Bronson examined his find and then murmured: "Scorched. This paper's been sucked up the flue by the draught. Queer. People don't burn such paper as this, as a rule."

Bronson placed the object carefully in his pocket and walked on past the house, which he recognized as belonging to the Stonewells, one of the oldest and most highly respected families of the town. He recalled that old John Stonewell had died a couple of years ago, bankrupt, and this fine old home was all that descended to the only son, John Stonewell, Jr. Of the latter Bronson knew little beyond the fact that he was a bachelor and lived there alone with a couple of servants. But the detective determined to find out more about the young man at once on account of the charred paper that came out of Stonewell's chimney. With this in mind he sauntered downtown and dropped in at his club. Almost the first person to engage him in conversation was Gene Franlau, an artist of some note.

Bronson had no particular hope of getting any information from Franlau concerning John Stonewell, but when he casually mentioned the latter's name he was agreeably surprised to find that the artist not only knew Stonewell quite well, but had recently had some business dealings with him.

"You ought to see the picture I painted for Stonewell," Franlau exclaimed. "It covers half the side of a room. Finest piece of work I've ever done."

"Scenery?" asked Bronson.

"No—picture of the house. Young Stonewell said his father had always wanted it, and he felt like it would be carrying out the old man's wishes to have it done."

"What does Stonewell do—his business, I mean?"

"Nothing particular," Franlau replied. "No one seems to know where he gets the money he lives on, as his father didn't leave him any. He's daffy about electricity. Regular wizard in that line. He's got a shop somewhere in the house and spends a lot of his time there fooling with his inventions. Too bad a man with his brains don't have to turn them to account."

"I'd like to see that picture," Bronson said as he rose to go.

"Go and take a look at it," Franlau returned quickly, pleased at the other's interest. "Tell Stonewell I sent you to see a sample of my work."

"Thanks, Franlau, I'll stop in and see it some day."

Bronson left the club congratulating himself on his good luck. He wanted to meet John Stonewell, and here was an opportunity to see him in his home. He cared nothing about the picture, of course, but it would afford a good excuse for his visit. Stonewell knew nothing of him or his busi-

ness, he felt sure, and it would be easy to pretend that he was a prospective customer of Franlau's and wished to see a sample of his work.

He accordingly called at the Stonewell house that same afternoon. A man servant, old and with a stupid countenance, admitted him and showed him into the library. While he waited for the master to appear Bronson took a good survey of the place.

It was a very ordinary room, with plain but comfortable furnishings. There, on the west wall, was the picture he had ostensibly come to see, he felt sure. It was a likeness of the Stonewell house. The canvas was about seven feet square. Its lower edge was on a line with the baseboard, about six inches above the floor. There was nothing remarkable about the picture Bronson decided after a casual glance. The most striking feature about it was the figure of a tall young man standing on the veranda in the act of ringing the door-bell. The young master himself, likely. Bronson saw that his guess was correct when, a moment later, John Stonewell entered the room. He could almost have believed that the man in the picture had stepped from the canvas to greet him.

John Stonewell was very tall and of athletic build. His complexion was light, his features sharp, his pale blue eyes were keen and had an expression of shrewdness in their depths. His manner was pleasant, his greeting most cordial.

"So Franlau sent you to see the painting?" he said when Bronson had stated his errand. "That fellow's mighty proud of this piece of work. Some painting. Just step over here and you'll get a better view of it."

Was it only his fancy or did a curious gleam flash into those pale eyes when he mentioned the painting? Bronson had no time to wonder, for his host began to talk about the picture which, he said, was his father's idea.

"Dad meant to have it done," he stated, "but he kept putting it off until it was too late—for him. So I decided to have it——" He paused, his gaze fixed steadily on the picture, and again Bronson noticed that strange expression in the keen eyes, for he was watching Stonewell closely. Although feigning interest in the painting, he was studying the man.

Stonewell's pause was only for a brief moment, then he went on with his talking, until interrupted by the shrill peal of a telephone bell in an adjoining room. After politely asking to be excused he went to answer the call, and Bronson was left alone. He was studying the picture indifferently, when all at once he gave a slight start. He did not move closer, nor did he touch it, but his eyes narrowed in a way which told that he was regarding Franlau's work with a new interest.

"Good workmanship," he observed when Stonewell came hurrying back. "The artist has a right to be proud of it." He lingered a while longer, for his genial host had other things to show him. When at last he took his leave Stonewell gave him a hearty invitation to call again.

"Drop in any time," he invited. "I'll be out of town to-morrow, but any time after that you're almost sure to find me here."

Bronson was a little puzzled over that invitation. With his usual keen discernment he fancied that there was a deeper reason for it than appeared on the surface. Why had Stonewell made it a point to say that he would be out of town on the morrow? Stonewell was a man of superior intelligence, and that the young man was well aware of the fact was shown by a certain boastfulness in his manner.

"He's a deep one," Bronson said musingly to himself. "Clever enough to hide things, and from what I happened to notice about that painting—well, if to-morrow's the day he'll be gone; that's the day I go back."

It was near noon of the next day when Bronson again rang the bell of the Stonewell house. He was politely informed by the old servant that Mr. Stonewell was not at home.

"So I know," the detective smilingly replied. "Mr. Stonewell told me he would not be here to-day, but he gave me permission to call any time—whether he was here or not—to examine the picture in the library. I am thinking of having a similar one paint-

ed, and I would like to see this one again, to study it more closely."

It was a flimsy excuse Bronson knew, but he decided it would pass with the stupid-faced servant, and it did. He was shown at once into the library, and then by way of dismissing the servant, he said: "It will not be necessary for you to remain here. I'll ring when I'm ready to be shown out."

Bronson stood for a moment earnestly contemplating the picture. "The frame is back in place now," he murmured to himself. Then raising his right hand, he pressed on the very real-looking door-bell. It gave under his touch. There was a soft click, and the picture slid upward until it almost touched the ceiling!

Bronson drew a deep breath of satisfaction as he saw that the picture had concealed a door in the wall.

The door was closed, but it swung noiselessly back at his slight push, and he found himself looking into a dimly lighted passage. He stepped inside, then paused, to cast a searching glance at the wall. He spied a single knob, which he turned carefully. There was anther click, and the picture slid down in its place.

Bronson walked swiftly along, his rubber-soled shoes making no sound on the bare floor of the passage.

At the end of it he found a good-sized room. It, too, was dimly lighted and bare of furnishings. In the centre of the north wall was a door. Bronson softly approached and pushed it open. Then he stood spellbound, gazing at what he saw.

At one side of the room was an open fireplace. There were chairs, heavy tables and other articles of furniture, but Bronson paid no heed to them, save to note that all were littered with the unmistakable paraphernalia of a counterfeiting outfit. One glance sufficed to tell him that he had discovered the den for which the police had so long been hunting.

Small wonder they had been baffled. Who would have thought of finding such a thing here in the heart of the most aristocratic section of the town? And John Stonewell was at the head of the whole business. His virile brain had conceived all this.

"It's lucky I came here to-day." Unconsciously Bronson uttered the words aloud, and as the last syllable left his lips an ominous click sounded almost against his ear, and a stern voice commanded: "Hands up!"

Bronson was caught. There was nothing to do but obey, and as he raised his hands above his head he felt another hand deftly remove the revolver from his pocket.

"So you think your coming here to-day was lucky, do you?" John Stonewell's tones, cold and sneering, cut in. "I'm thinking you'll be changing your mind 'fore long. Now, we'll just put your little gun away. You'll have no further use for it." He dropped Bronson's weapon in a table drawer as he spoke. "Let me tell you, partner," he went on, "that I mistrusted you at first sight. It just struck me that you were a detective—a smart one, too, to fall for my little bait about being out of town. A country greenhorn couldn't have played into my hands better than you have. You're a wise bird, I'll say. I figured that if there was anything more you wanted to find out you'd rather come when I was away, and it seems I figured correctly. Yeh—I'm out of town, all right," and he laughed jeeringly.

While he was speaking Stonewell stood just behind Bronson, all the while keeping the revolver uncomfortably close to the latter's temple. "Yes, Mr. Detective," he continued after a moment's pause, "what people don't know won't hurt 'em, but when they know a little too much, like you, for instance—well, dead men tell no tales. Now, make a bee-line for that southwest corner. One misstep or a move of your hands and a bullet goes through you! March!"

Bronson did as he was told. He walked across the room and came to a stop only when the wall blocked his progress. Stonewell put out his left hand, and his fingers touched an innocent-looking spot on the wall paper. To Bronson's amazement a section of the wall swung inward like a door. Through the opening he saw a small room, or rather a large closet, which was quite dark until Stonewell pressed another hid-

den button; then an electric bulb hanging from the ceiling flashed forth a brilliant light.

The closet resembled a bathroom, although there were none of the usual bathroom furnishings. Floors and walls were of smooth white tile.

"This room was designed especially for meddlers like you," Stonewell said in his cool, level tones, as the prisoner paused on the threshold. "One twist of this knob turns the faucet yonder. See?"

Bronson paid no attention to the turning of the knob. His eyes were fixed on a faucet on the opposite side of the room near the ceiling. As he watched the water began to drip—slowly at first, then in a steady stream. "I think you can understand that, even if you are dull," Stonewell was saying. "Neat little death cell that. This door fits water-tight and the water rises pretty fast! See?"

Bronson did see all too plainly. Once inside that tiled room with the door shut and the water turned on, he would drown like a rat in a trap!

"You've got me, Stonewell," he said slowly and without a sign of tremor in his voice. "But if my game's up so is yours. Some of my pals know I'm here. The house is being watched. If I don't come out in a short time your place will be raided."

"Thanks for the information," was Stonewell's unconcerned reply. "Since you've given me that little tip I can be in a safer clime than this, while the raiders——" He paused and considered deeply for a moment, then with a return of his old, boastful manner he said: "I really don't see any harm in showing you the trick. As I said before, dead men tell no tales—here on earth, and I guess what you tell the folks in spirit land about my little inventions won't matter. Right-about face. now, and I'll show you something before you start on that long journey from which no detective ever returns."

Bronson turned eagerly, thankful for anything which would take him from the vicinity of that fatal room. Of course he did not mean to enter it without a struggle, even though the odds were all against him. But even a moment's delay might mean something for him.

Still keeping the detective covered with his weapon, Stonewell marched him to the north side of the room to where a small cabinet was built in the wall. With his left hand he opened the small door.

The interior of the cabinet would doubtless have been highly interesting to an electrician. Bronson's knowledge along that line was somewhat limited, but he knew that those wires and batteries, harmless one minute, could be full of deadly power the next.

"My pet invention," Stonewell said, with a ring of pride in his voice. "Queen of 'em all. When these two innocent-looking wires," indicating them with his left forefinger, "come in contact with each other they set off a dozen jars of explosives which are secreted about this room. The result, this whole section of the house, or maybe the entire house, will be blown to atoms. The switch that operates the wires, I may add, is located at my shop, some distance away. So I shall be well out of danger when the blow-up takes place. Thus you can imagine the fate of your pals when they come in here. There won't be enough pieces left of them to hold a funeral, nor of you, either, for that matter. Your drowned body will go up with the rest, and I won't be put to the trouble of disposing of it as I did your friend Bardell's."

In spite of his wonderful self-control Bronson started. So that was what had happened to the missing Detective Bardell! He had been drowned in that deathtrap! No wonder his fate had remained a mystery!

"Just as mine will," Bronson thought bitterly, for there had been no truth in his statement that friends would come to his rescue. No one knew that he was here. He had not heeded his chief's caution to tell where he was going. Like Bardell, he had wanted to handle this case all by himself. And, like Bardell, his disappearance would remain a mystery. For Stonewell was in deadly earnest! Until Bardell was mentioned Bronson had felt some faint hope

that the fellow was bluffing. But now he knew better.

Stonewell would stop at nothing to annihilate his detectors. He would even sacrifice his ancestral home.

"Go back!" Stonewell commanded harshly. "I've fooled with you long enough. Soon as you're behind that door I'll betake myself away from here, so if what you say is true—turn!"

But Bronson did not turn. Instead his head bent forward and he peered at something within the cabinet as if fascinated.

"Look!" he said in an awed whisper.

"What is it?" Stonewell asked sharply, stepping a little to one side and peering also. For the instant he was thrown off his guard, and in that instant Bronson's right hand shot downward and grasped the wrist that was holding the revolver, turning it so that the weapon pointed to the floor.

The act would have been a waste of effort on Bronson's part had there been no other power to aid him, for he was no physical match for Stonewell, and could not have hoped to even wrest the weapon from him. But as his right hand closed on Stonewell's wrist the fingers of his left seized one of the wires inside the cabinet and drew it within a hair's breadth of the other one.

A cry of alarm burst from Stonewell's lips.

"Stop, you fool!" he yelled, his left hand darting towards Bronson's.

"You stop!" ordered the detective. "Touch my hand, jar me ever so slightly, and these wires will come together. You know what that means for us both."

Stonewell grasped the importance of what Bronson was saying. He stood perfectly still, his only motion being the heaving of his chest as he breathed hard and fast.

"Drop that wire!" he said tensely.

"Drop that gun!" Bronson ordered in his turn. "Unless you drop it instantly I'll turn the trick that will blow us both to kingdom-come. I prefer that to being drowned in a rathole. Drop it! Quick!"

Like a man dazed, Stonewell obeyed.

"Now, back—three paces!" Bronson's fingers still gripped the wire.

Again Stonewell obeyed, and with a quick movement Bronson seized the revolver off the floor.

"Now, march!" he said tersely, raising it on a level with Stonewell's head. "March straight out of this infernal hole."

John Stonewell found himself forced into his library. The tables had been turned on him so completely as to bewilder him. With no further show of resistance he sank into a chair and dropped his face in his hands. For a time he was silent; then, while they waited for the police to come, he said:

"Tell me, how did you get wise?"

"When I was looking at the picture while you were at the telephone," Bronson answered. "I noticed a narrow margin along the bottom that looked cleaner than the rest, and I saw a lump just below the painted door-bell, which told me the picture could be moved by pressing the spring where that lump showed. That spelled secret passage——"

"I know all that," Stonewell interrupted impatiently. "I saw while I was talking that the picture was slightly out of place, and I knew if you were a detective, as I suspected you to be, you would notice it."

"Yes, I noticed it," Bronson said. "I knew sliding pictures generally served a purpose, like hiding doors, and I came back to investigate."

"But what brought you here, in the first place?" Stonewell insisted.

"Oh," Bronson answered carelessly, "just some smoke coming out of your chimney on a hot day and a scorched scrap of paper which proved to be the corner of a misprinted counterfeit bill."

A Queer Detective Case

By FRANK RIPLEY

ONE day, as I returned to police headquarters, after having put in several hours on a till-tapping case, I found a queer-looking old man awaiting me. He wore a reddish wig, shaved clean, was very precise about his clothing and was eccentric in speech and action. As he met me he said:

"Confound it, sir, you should have better manners than to keep me cooling my heels around a place like this."

"But I didn't know you were here."

"It was your business to know. Dem it, sir, I am out of patience with you."

"Well, I am here, and now what can I do for you?"

"Resign from the force at once."

"What?"

"Can't you understand the English language? Resign, sir?"

"For what reason?"

"So that you may work for me."

He handed me his card, and I saw that his name was Ronald Terry. After a while he informed me that he was a bachelor with plenty of cash, and that he had a scheme which he wished to work out. He offered to engage me for a year at four times the salary I was then receiving, but would not tell me what the work was. After two or three interviews with him, and after ascertaining from trustworthy devices that he was what he represented himself, I closed with his offer. The day I entered his service he said to me:

"I understand that you have been in most of the large cities of the United States. Did you ever happen to notice a locality like this in any other town—a street about fifty feet wide running off a business street at an angle, but only two blocks long before it ended at a bluff? This short street is built up with brick houses. On the first corner on the right is a drugstore. The intersecting street is hardly wider than an alley and is not paved. To make it more clear to you I will draw a diagram."

"I do not recollect any location like it," I answered, "and think we shall have to go from town to town to find it."

"Very well. We start to-morrow. Be at my hotel at 8 o'clock in the morning. I shall lay out our route, and whenever we arrive in a city you do the searching. That's what I have hired you for."

I thought him "light in the head," as the expression goes, if not worse. However, as he had the money and was his own master, and as he was paying me a big salary, it was not my business to find fault. I soon discovered that he had his own peculiar ideas in the most trifling matters. For instance, I was not to know him when on the train. I must, if possible, take the front end of the car, while he took the rear. At the hotel I must sleep on the floor above him. Any business between us must be done as formally as if we had never met. At our first stopping place he planned to stay just so many days. I was to cover only so much of the city per day. We went directly to Portland, Me., to begin our search, and although I could have covered the city in two days he planned that we should stay sixteen. Therefore, after the first two days I had nothing to do but loaf around. On the seventh day he sent his card to my room with a request that I call upon him on a matter of business, and when I entered he asked:

"Well, what progress in your search?"

"I can find no such street here, sir."

"Very well; I give you nine more days in which to make sure."

I spent the nine days in fishing and sailing, and we went from Portland to Augusta. We put in six days there, and then went to Montpelier, Vt. We took each State in rotation, visiting every city above 10,000 population, and by the time we were through with the State of New York the first year was up. Every day found Mr. Terry the same queer, quaint specimen of humanity. The same formality was observed, and once, in a railroad smash-up, when I ventured to inquire if he had been hurt, he looked at me with a cold stare and replied:

"Confound it, sir, you must have mistaken me for some one else!"

We were well along in the second year, and were in Wilmington, Del., when I met an old friend from the West and told him what a wild-goose chase I was on. He looked at the diagram for a few minutes and then said:

"You'll strike this odd street in Cincinnati. I could guide you to the exact spot."

He went fishing into his baggage and found an old map of Cincinnati, and in five minutes he had located the street. I sent my card up to Mr. Terry, and followed it to inform him of my discovery, but he sat down on me with:

"Confound it, man, if you are tired of my ways and wages you can quit! I told you at the outset that I should run this thing myself."

And to prove that he meant to he planned a route which did not permit us to reach Cincinnati for nearly four months. He gave me to understand, on arriving there, that we would remain thirty-one days, and, although I could have found the street in an hour, I knew Mr. Terry too well to object to his plans. On the second day I went over the street. It was ancient and rather queer, but no more so than many others. It was tenanted by a poor but respectable class of people. Naturally enough, I had always had great curiosity to know why my queer employer wanted to find this street, and so, day in and day out, I pursued my investigations. I asked every resident for information of Terry, but no one had ever heard of him. The last house on the left-hand side was up against the bluff, and it was No. 50.

Standing on the high hill, of which Cincinnati has so many, one could have dropped a stone down upon the roof of this house, which was old and untenanted. I inspected it outside and in, and saw from its condition that it had been unoccupied for years. It was a frame dwelling, and the floors were about gone, the plastering all off, and the doors and much of the partitions had been carried away for fuel. It struck me that this old house held the key to the mystery, but though I searched high and low I could find nothing.

On the morning of the thirty-first day Mr. Terry sent for me and inquired if I had found the street. This was the only time he had spoken to me since our arrival. I replied that I had, and he then said:

"You will go to your room, lock yourself in, and remain until I send for you."

I did nothing of the kind. I went out, reached the street, posted myself in the hallway of a tenement, and an hour later saw Mr. Terry appear. He went straight to the old house, was inside for half an hour, and then came out with a package in his hand—a package of papers wrapped in oil-skin. He walked off without a glance to the right or left, and I took a short cut and reached the hotel first. After dinner he sent for me and said:

"Our search is ended. You have been faithful and sensible. Here is the balance of your salary for the second year, and here is $1,000 extra. Good-by, sir."

"But won't you enlighten——"

"Confound it, sir, good-by," he interrupted, and I picked up my money and went.

Two or three weeks later, after I had worked up a case in a town in Ohio, a woman called at the hotel and asked to see me. I found her to be an old maid about fifty years old, wearing the traditional ringlets and eye-glasses, and as stiff as a crowbar in her demeanor. She, too, had an original way of arriving at the point. After introducing herself as Miss Joy she said:

"I am rich. Some folks call me eccentric, but I am simply sensible. I wish to travel, and I wish to hire you as an escort.

You will be my employee and I shall exact the most formal respect of you. I may need you for a year, or may not, but I will hire you for that length of time."

After a little talk we arrived at a salary satisfactory to both. She lived in a town twenty miles away, and gave herself a week to get ready in. At the end of that time I reported for duty, and found her prepared to start. She had two fair-sized trunks for baggage, and directed me to buy tickets to New York. She didn't say how much money she had, how long she was going to stay, or give me any other particulars. I obeyed directions, and in due time we arrived in New York and put up at a first-class hotel. I acted as her guide and escort, but such was our demeanor toward each other that no one could have made out the relationship. She seemed to argue that if she dropped formality for a moment I might propose marriage, and it was "sir" on every possible occasion.

She settled the hotel bill herself, but gave me money enough to buy tickets to Boston after a stay of twenty days. We were in Boston ten days, and then went to Hartford, and there I got the first inkling of her idea in making the trip. She sent for me to come to the parlor, and when I arrived she began:

"Mr. Jewett, you have noticed the queer-looking man seated on my right at the table?"

"Yes'm," I answered, for I had reason to notice him. He was old Ronald Terry, who had previously engaged my services on that mysterious hunt for an odd street.

"Blue eyes and baldheaded, and looks very fatherly."

"Yes'm."

"I wish you to ascertain whether he is married or a widower." I investigated old Terry.

That evening I reported to her that the baldheaded man was a widower and in the real estate business in an interior town.

"Very well, sir," she stiffly replied, "you may now retire, and I will send for you when I want you."

After that I watched her at meal-time, and I soon caught on to the fact that she had "set her cap" for the widower. It was laughable to see her try to ape the girl of twenty, and in three days everybody in the dining-room had caught on and was giving her the guy. She knew her gait, however, and in about a week more I got an order to show up again in the parlor.

"Mr. Jewett," she said, as I stood before her, "I—I think that Mr. Terry rath—rather likes me."

"Yes'm."

"You may say to him that I am worth $80,000 in cash and bonds, never have been married, and that his appearance pleases me."

I managed after a day or two to get in with Mr. Terry again and convey this information, and I saw that it hit him right between the eyes. Two hours later he called on her, and three days after his call she sent for me to say:

"Mr. Jewett, I will pay you your salary for the year. Mr. Terry and I are engaged."

"Quite a romance," I laughed.

"More of a romance than you imagine," she retorted, "for I have quietly been following you and Terry around for several years and carefully watched every move you have both been making."

I glared at the old lady in astonishment, but when I recovered my composure I managed to gasp:

"You did? What for?"

"To right a great wrong," she answered sternly, and opening a drawer she took out the very parcel of papers old Terry had brought from the old house and held them up. "Do you recognize these?" she asked.

"Yes," I admitted. "Mr. Terry had them."

"Well, I stole them from Terry," she said. "I picked his pocket while the old fool was trying to make love to me for the sake of the money he thought I had. It was to get these papers that I've been shadowing you and him. I felt sure he would never let these documents get out of his possession unless he destroyed them, and figured I could get them if I got into his confidence. My theory was correct."

"Then you are not going to marry him?"

"I should say not," she retorted. "I had a wealthy uncle who lived and died in the house these papers came from. He formerly lived in New York, where Terry was his lawyer."

"I see. There's money behind this affair."

"Several millions. You know what a grasping, avaricious man Terry is. Well, when he made out my uncle's will he saw to it that if I was not found when my uncle died he, Terry, would hold that fortune in trust."

"Crooked work," I commented.

"It was," she declared. "Terry had never met me and designed that I should never get that money. I learned from one of my uncle's servants that Terry called at his house during uncle's absence and found an unfinished letter on the desk which my uncle had been writing to me. The servant saw him read it, and when Terry was gone the letter slipped into the waste-basket, where the servant afterward found it and mailed it to me. Here is the letter. I'll read it to you," and she took an old letter from the drawer and read aloud:

"My Dear Mary: I have learned that my lawyer, Ronald Terry, is a scoundrel, and have made out a new will in your favor, leaving every dollar I own to you alone. I have bought a new house in another city and have had a secret compartment made in the library floor, in which I will secrete my new will. The house is in a street about fifty feet wide, running off a business street at an angle, but it is only two blocks long before it ends in a bluff. This short street is built of brick houses, and the house, No. 50, is one of them. On the first corner on the right is a drugstore. The intersecting street is hardly wider than an alley and is not paved. The name of the city is——"

Here the letter ended abruptly at the bottom of the page, and there was no writing on the other side. Instantly I understood the whole situation. Neither the lady nor old Terry knew where the uncle had gone, as she informed me that the old man had slipped out of New York without telling any one of his intention. I now understood why Terry employed me to find that street, and why Miss Joy had been shadowing him so persistently.

"My name is not Joy," she said. "That's an assumed name. I am Mary Ladd—same name as my uncle, but changed it so Terry would not recognize me."

"You are a clever woman," I said frankly.

"One must be sharp nowadays," she smiled.

"What are you going to do to Terry?"

"Just sue him for an accounting, as he had the first will probated. The facts are now in the hands of my lawyers, and as I'm sure to win I'll be worth three millions, and Terry will suffer agony when he has to give up the money he schemed to keep from me."

Miss Ladd paid me well for my services, and by the time I became reinstated on the force in New York I heard that she had gained possession of her legacy and old Terry had died of heart failure brought on by the shock of his exposure.

FIFTEEN FAKE $100 BILLS

SECRET SERVICE men of the Treasury Department are looking for a man who gave a bootlegger fifteen spurious $100 bills in New York in payment for liquor.

The worthless $100 bills were received at the Treasury Department a few days ago, accompanied by a brief story of their appearance at the bank. The methods used were original but very crude, Treasurer Frank White said to-day.

"Originally," he said, "they had been $1 bills. The man who raised them clipped part of a cigar coupon bearing the words 'one hundred' and '100' and pasted them on each of the $1 bills. The bootlegger, who was anxious to get large bills, was paid in the dark and did not know that he had been trimmed until he presented them at the bank the next day. The bills were sent to the Treasury Department for investigation."

Canceled Accounts

By POLICE CAPTAIN HOWARD

HARGROVE pushed his head past the edge of the shed, which stood at the end of the alley, and peered at the man who was hurrying toward him with a small black satchel swinging in his left hand. He clenched more tightly the length of lead pipe in his hand, tensing his body as he waited. As the footfalls of the man with the satchel came nearer Hargrove poised the pipe in the air, and as the other man stepped across the alley he swung it downward. He straddled an instant, his eyes blazing, over the prostrate body.

Then he dropped the pipe and snatched up the black satchel. It was filled, he knew, with packets of currency and bags of silver—the semi-monthly payroll of the employees of a large planing mill located in the city, which this man had been carrying from the bank to the mill office. Hargrove whirled to run from the motionless form, but he was halted by a shrill, terrorized squeal behind him.

He jerked around to find the clear, blue eyes of a small, eight-year-old boy staring, wide and horrified, into his. Hargrove recognized the boy as Jimmy Rucker, a son of the very man he had struck down! In the boy's white hand was gripped a tin lunch basket, his father's. Jimmy Rucker stared at the man in speechless horror.

With a savage curse Hargrove swung at the boy and knocked him sprawling across the body of his father. Then he turned and ran pell-mell down the alley, clutching the black satchel close to him.

Two blocks up the alley he stopped, breathless. A glance down the passageway showed him that already the prone body of the elder Rucker, and Jimmy's cries, had attracted attention.

"Damn that kid!" Hargrove swore. "He'll blab. He'll tell 'em who socked his old man. Now I've got to get out of this town, and get out quick!"

An open door invited entrance into the dark interior of a large barn. Slipping inside, he selected an easy position and crouched in the darkness. Unthinking and stolid he waited interminable hours while the day passed, and finally darkness lowered. Noises stirred around the fugitive. Lanterns flashed up and down the alley, and many footfalls crunched through the cinder-packed paths around the barn. Passing men conversed gruffly. Once the door of the barn was opened and a man, thrusting a gleaming lantern before him, stepped inside. Hargrove sat stock-still, a cold sweat chilling him. The man with the lantern glanced around with more fear and hurry than thoroughness and went out again, leaving Hargrove breathing more freely.

So, the thief thought, a posse was searching for him, were they? That meant only one thing—his blow had killed the messenger.

He shuddered the next instant. Before his eyes, as clear as though in life, came the wide blue eyes and terrified expression of little Jimmy Rucker. With a growl Hargrove rubbed his hands across his face as though to erase the unsettling vision.

"Drat that kid!"

The night wore on with Hargrove slinking about inside the cavernous barn, waiting for an opportunity to slip away. Finally, when activities around him ceased, he eased out the door and began a silent trip up the alley. He continued quietly and stealthily, without attracting notice, until he reached the railroad yards, and blessed the good luck which ordained that a freight train should be leaving the town at that time. The man darted across the tracks in

the darkness and climbed on a car as the train rumbled slowly by.

He clutched the black satchel and lay on the bumpers as the road rushed past. The blur of the ground below and the hiss of the air past his ears brought Hargrove's mind into working order, where before, during those taut moments in the barn, he had sat unthinking and stolid. Now he speculated as to the amount in the satchel. There must be ten thousand dollars if there was one cent. At least ten thousand—yes!

Hargrove saw an end to sickening manual labor and a quenching of his desire for luxury and independence. He had money now and would live high! Toil, slavery—not for him! He'd got away from it now forever.

Again, at the height of his gloating, the vision of the wide-eyed boy, the face of little Jimmy Rucker, came again, haunting him with its terrible clarity.

"Gee!" Hargrove spat and closed his eyes. "What's the matter with me? Am I seein' things?"

He forcibly brought his mind into speculation as to what he would do with the money he had stolen. Then he steered his thoughts away from the recurring realization that he had done murder—and from the persistent vision of Jimmy Rucker's face. When a small station on the road brought the train to a stop early that morning he slipped off and hurried away.

He "hopped" another freight going in a different direction, and brought up at another small town. In this way he zigzagged confusingly across the country, in order to escape the network of publicity which he knew the police departments were weaving around him.

Seated in a small restaurant in a jerkwater town of the Middle West, he munched a sandwich and waited for his train to pull in. His mind was occupied entirely now with his escape. The final stop would be in New York. In the swirling masses of Gotham's humanity he could lose himself after he had tracelessly reached his destination. A beard now fringed his lips and chin and disguised him sufficiently so that accidental identification was extremely unlikely. Hargrove was quite satisfied with his success thus far. The contents of the satchel which he had snatched from Rucker was nine thousand dollars in cash. He grinned to himself.

"No more work for me!" he told himself. "This is too easy. So long's you don't make a fool of yourself, Hargrove, thinkin' about what you did, you're all to the gravy."

He arose from his stool, and was about to step away when a small boy, running from his playmates, pushed against him. Hargrove stepped backward. His face had gone pale in a flash, and he stared aghast at the youngster.

"Jimmy Rucker!" he gasped aloud.

The next instant he cursed himself for a brainless fool.

"My name's Frankie!" the breathless boy lisped innocently, staring up into Hargrove's face.

The crook saw the smiles of those around him and swore; then he hastily paid his check and lost himself in the crowd waiting the train at the track.

"What a damn fool I am!" he denounced himself. "Yellin' out that kid's name like that!"

He caught the train and settled comfortably in a seat. Still confused by the accidental slip of his tongue, he attempted to centre his interest in a magazine. As he read the type faded before his eyes and the terrorized features of a blue-eyed boy moved before him.

Hargrove clasped his hands over his eyes and shuddered.

"That kid again! That kid's goin' to get me! Some day, somehow, that kid's goin' to get me, and get me good! I know it! I see his face everywhere I look!"

Arriving at last in New York, he mixed with the slack of the melting-pot. The abundance of money, which had come into his hands so easily, upset his mental reserve, and he soon found himself inside of a notorious gambling house where, innocent in the tricks of skillful manipulators of the cardboards, he allowed himself to sit in a three-handed game of stud poker. He finished with just nine dollars in his pocket.

The crook arose from the table with a

chuckle of evil mirth. So his money was gone, was it? Nine thousand, lost in three hours! Well, he could get more easily enough, just as he had got the first lot!

He had always obtained money when he had wanted it. When he had clerked in the grocery store back in Cedar Point, where he had committed the murder, where he obtained the money he had just lost, he pilfered small sums from the cash drawer without old Trooper Brown, the proprietor, ever discovering it. He had escaped from the scene of the crime he committed when he had sent Rucker's life from his body with a cowardly blow. It was easy! Sure, he was going to get more money!

Then he began what was to become a criminal career which covered a period of more than twenty years.

These twenty years of crime hardened him. As he sat in the rear of a saloon in a town of one hundred thousand population in upper New York and discussed with his cronies a plan of blowing the vault of the Empire Trust Company, he perfected each detail with methodical care.

"Listen hard," Hargrove said, glancing sharply at Shorty Scott and Mont Reily, who sat across the table from him. "It's easy if you get it straight."

Shorty was to get inside the bank and keep the coast clear while Mont kept his eyes peeled outside and Hargrove himself cracked the door of the safe. It was simplicity itself. The watchman was to be disposed of and the alarm system was antiquated enough to render it useless.

"We will split three ways," Hargrove said easily, staring with his cold gray eyes at the eager faces of his associates.

"Great!" Shorty exclaimed. "I'm aimin' to get spliced, and the cash will come in handy!"

"You keep your woman out of this!" Hargrove warned.

"Let *me* take care of my woman!"

Hargrove's eyes flashed dangerously, but Mont interfered with a raised glass of gin.

"Drink to the success of it!" he suggested, and the three drained their glasses.

In Hargrove's eyes as he glanced again at Shorty was a cool, sinister menace.

The night of the bank-breaking came, and the plan worked perfectly. At the timed moment the trio pounced upon the night-watchman and put him out of business with a smart clip on the head. Mont found and cut the wires of the alarm system, then jimmied a window, after which Hargrove slipped inside. Outside the window Mont crouched, keen eyes peering up and down the dark street. Inside the window on the sill a few feet above Shorty stood on guard, silent and listening. Hargrove worked rapidly at the door of the safe, packing the cracks with soap and pouring nitroglycerine into them.

There was a sizzling of the fuse, a muffled, deadened boom, and the front of the vault door was torn from its hinges. In a few moments Shorty and Hargrove had pulled from the safe securities and cash amounting to a hundred thousand dollars. As Hargrove saw the large amount of the loot his narrowed eyes gleamed. Shorty returned to the window ledge again, peering outside. Hargrove's hand crept to his hip pocket. His automatic flashed as he leveled it at Shorty's back.

Crack!

Shorty's body hung limply, slowly sagged, then he crumpled loosely and crashed to the floor. Hargrove grinned as he stepped over the body and whistled through the window to his pal below.

"What's up?" came Mont's sharp whisper.

"The dirty crook tried to double-cross me!" Hargrove hissed, pointing at the dark form on the floor.

"Hurry up! I hear somebody comin'!"

Hargrove jumped to the ground beside Mont, who was standing, alert, with bared gun. Up the street a single dark form appeared. It halted abruptly, then a quick flash of red appeared, a report snapped out and something deadly hissed past Hargrove's head.

Instantly Mont sent lead singing back in reply, while Hargrove whirled and dashed away. Mont followed after him, and they sped down a bewildering maze of alleys and paused finally in the belief that they had shaken their pursuers.

"What'd Shorty do?" Mont demanded when he had caught his breath.

"Tried to brain me!" Hargrove lied glibly. "He was sneakin' up behind me when I caught him. The dirty crook! I guess he thought he'd like it better if there was only two ways to split instead of three. And me engineerin' this!"

"That don't sound like Shorty!" Mont answered quickly and shrewdly.

"Shut up!" Hargrove flashed. "You get half now, don't you? Or will you *live* to get half?"

"You double-crosser! You plugged Shorty yourself!"

"Mont, you fool, keep your head!" warned Hargrove dangerously.

They returned to the rear of the saloon, as they had planned, with the loot inside a suitcase which they had planted conveniently near. The night crawled by as they sat at a table, idly conversing and drinking. It was a bluff to appear innocent should any officer of the law come in.

When morning neared Hargrove arose and Mont followed suit.

"Come to my room and we'll split," Hargrove invited.

"Poor Shorty!" Mont mourned. "He was a square old pal!"

"Don't be a fool! I told you he tried to double-cross me!"

"*Maybe* he did!"

"What do you mean? You yella——"

Just then the rear door of the saloon slammed open. Hargrove whirled to witness the entrance of a grim young woman whose eyes blazed malevolently into his.

"Look out!" Mont warned Hargrove in a whisper. "That's Shorty's wife."

"Shorty's wife!" Hargrove muttered hollowly.

He stared, fascinated, at the set, determined face of the girl in the doorway.

"What do you want here?" he demanded gruffly.

"You killer!" she called him. "You killer!"

Simultaneously her small white fist shot up from a fold of her skirt and leveled a tiny automatic at him.

"You shot Shorty!" she declared. "You thought you finished him, but you didn't! He crawled out that back window and came draggin' himself to me. He told me how you shot him in the back! You sneakin' cur, this is where you get yours!"

But Hargrove acted instantly. He darted forward, gripped the automatic and snatched it away as it barked harmlessly into the wall. Mont snarled and jerked out his own gun, but Hargrove fired at him, and Mont's arm dropped limp and wet. The girl screamed and clutched desperately to Hargrove, but he shook off her frantic grip and jumped through the door, slamming it behind him. Without waiting an instant he sped away. As he ran he saw up the alley the glint of light against nickel at the level of a man's breast, and realized that the revengeful girl had notified the police of his part in the crime. Even then the police were trailing him!

"This town's too hot to hold me now!" he panted as he tore away, circling to confuse his pursuers. Next he darted to his room in a small lodging house not far off. Without lighting any betraying globes he packed clothing and supplies into a valise, slipped away again and sought the railroad yards. Boarding a freight car going west, he lay tensely on the bumpers as the cars dashed over the rails.

Afterward Hargrove zigzagged across the country again, dodging here and there, tortured by the thought that the police were on his trail. Just one week after the tragedy he found himself in a small town, the quiet and peace of which suggested safety.

As he walked down the outlying portion of the main street evening was falling. The street in the lowering dusk seemed vaguely familiar. Finally he realized that this was Cedar Point, where, twenty years before, he had slugged the life from Rucker, the messenger of the lumber company.

Across the street he saw the very alley where he had hidden! It was unchanged in all those twenty years which had passed. Hargrove's face paled at the sight. In imagination he saw again the limp form lying on the cobblestones, and beside it the small boy, his round face blanched, his eyes wide with terror.

"Curse that kid!" Hargrove swore. "Ain't I ever goin' to get over seein' his face in front of me?"

The changes wrought by twenty years of hard life rendered him different in appearance from the man he had been when he had lived and slaved in Cedar Point. He walked down the street with calm bravado. As he viewed the stores clustered about the main portion of the town he recollected everything associated with the place. There, across the street, was the general store where he had worked for Trooper Brown—and pilfered nickels and dimes from the till. And through the glass windows in the dim light of lamps Hargrove could see Trooper Brown himself, gray of hair and wrinkled of face, but the same old fellow of twenty years ago.

Hargrove crossed the street to enter the store. As he moved a muffled, reverberating boom, shaking the ground and air alike, echoed from the direction of the river which flowed past the town at the north. The sound was singularly reminiscent of the explosion of a bursting safe, but Hargrove thought that there must be blasting going on among the hills.

He entered the general store and smiled at Trooper Brown, who interrogatively gazed at him with watery eyes.

"Got quite a nice little town here," he said.

"Best town in the state, sir!" Trooper Brown answered, "and growing all the time—all the time."

"Seem to be doing some blasting up north, hey?"

"Yep, blasting. Progressive little place, this is. Yes, sir; goin' to build a big dam up there. Big mills goin' to locate up yonder. Going to use the river fer water power. It'll be the makin' of the town, sir, the makin' of the town. You are a stranger here, ain't you?"

"First time I've ever been here," Hargrove lied.

"They be goin' to blast all night, I hear. Got to rush the work through—something in the contract, something technical, that I don't understand."

Hargrove bought a cigar and seated himself in a chair, watching the men who came and went—men whose faces were vaguely familiar, yet oddly changed by age. As one husky laborer entered and bought a paper of chewing tobacco the garrulous Trooper Brown inquired:

"Got all the money on hand, all right, Smith?"

"Yep, delivered it all to-day. Goin' to put it in the safe. Keep a lot of money there. I guess the men's glad to-morrow's pay day, all right."

Hargrove's ears pricked up. So the payroll of the crew, which was doing the blasting north of the town presumably, was there, ready for distribution the next day.

"Why not make a haul here and beat it?" Hargrove reasoned. "Listen to that blasting!" Another muffled, reverberant boom echoed among the hills. "Why, if I blew a safe in the middle of this town, nobody'd even notice it, with that noise goin' on!"

He took up his suitcase and stepped to the counter.

"Colonel," he asked, "where's the office of this company that's building the dam?"

"Up that away," Trooper Brown obligingly informed him, pointing. "Can't miss it. It's a little office, all new built, just north of the town. Got some business with 'em?"

"I have," Hargrove answered meaningly.

He stepped outside again, walking rapidly in the designated distance. At intervals as he walked the jarring boom of another blast in the hills was audible. He passed outside the town and came within sight of a small, temporary structure just north of the city, which stood on a broad expanse of flat ground, and noted that inside it was dark. Then he stepped to its door and knocked noisily. No one answered.

He tried turning the door-knob. It was locked, and he stepped to the window, applied pressure upward and sneered when it responded and arose.

"They're just leadin' me to this money!" he mumbled.

Climbing inside, he dragged his suitcase with him. In one corner of the impro-

vised office stood an old-fashioned, massive safe, toward which Hargrove stepped. He kneeled before it, smiling belittlingly.

"Ought to be able to get into this one with a can-opener. And they keep the payroll in here! My gosh!"

He searched through his suitcase and found a small bottle bearing the label of a patent mouth-wash, but which, as Hargrove uncorked it, gave off a pungent odor.

"Always carry your tools with you!" he grinned. "Soup and soap—them's my stand-bys!"

He soaped the cracks of the door with a cake taken from his suitcase, then carefully poured the contents of the bottle into the cracks. From inside the sweatband of his derby hat he took a two-foot length of fuse.

"This is simple!" he congratulated himself.

He primed the fuse and inserted it and struck a match, glancing around furtively.

"Inside of ten seconds I'll have ten thousand!" he promised himself. "Oh, this is too easy!"

He applied the match to the white cord. It sputtered and flashed. Hargrove backed away, crouching in the corner of the office, with his fingers stopping his ears, his eyes closed, his body tense, waiting for the muffled concussion of the explosion which would blow the door off the front of the safe.

"Can never get used to the shock!" he grinned, plugging his ears more tightly. "Always hurts my ear-drums." He peered squintingly at the sputtering fuse. "Go 'long, little one."

He braced himself for the shock of the explosion. At that instant the flame reached the explosive in the cracks of the safe door.

The shock which followed was tremendous—far greater than any which had echoed from the hills, and so terrible that Hargrove did not hear it. It seemed to him that in one brief flitting instant he saw the round, terror-stamped face of a small boy whose baby-blue eyes gazed into his hauntingly, and then a great, hollow blackness filled him. His mangled body lay there, but his soul had gone and for the final reckoning.

The shock of the explosion which Hargrove set off was heard for miles around. Not only was the safe door torn from its hinges, but the entire safe was reduced to impalpable fragments, and the office itself was crushed to splinters.

Before the great excavation in the ground, where the office had stood, old Trooper Brown, who had left his groceries and notions, stood regarding the terrific damage and mused:

"I told him it was dangerous," he said to an old crony beside him, who wagged his head sagely. "But you can't tell Jim Rucker nothin'; he's too hard-headed. Instead o' puttin' his money in the safe, where it belongs, and his dynamite in a shanty, he puts the money in a bank and uses the safe to store his supply of dynamite! Darn fool idea, I calls it!"

HAND-SHAKER SHAKEN DOWN

SAM HELLER, twenty-nine, of No. 139 Essex street, walked up to Marcus Kipness of No. 305 South Third street, Brooklyn, the other afternoon at Broadway and Ninth street, and commenced shaking the latter's right hand with much fervor.

"I don't know you," said Kipness.

"Sure you do," said Sam. "I used to live next-door to you. Meet my friend here; he's worth $50,000"—and he continued shaking Kipness's hand vigorously, while the other man went through his right pocket.

Kipness screamed, and Patrolman Cohen arrested Heller and brought him before Magistrate Edward Weil in Essex court. The other man got away.

"You can shake the hands of workhouse inmates for three months," Magistrate Weil said.

When the Spark Kindled

By P. T. RAYMOND

THE honk-honk of a passing taxi and the clatter of hoofbeats in rhyme with the rumble of wheels over the pavements awakened the "Hawk" with a start. In the cellar of a squalid rookery, where he had found an asylum the night before, he crawled from beneath a filthy, mildewed mattress, rubbing the sleep from his eyes with a grimy hand.

"Ugh!" he grunted with aversion, shuddering as he brushed the dirt from his clothes.

The "Hawk" was a character in a class by himself. Carl Bradway was the name entered on the records a few days after his birth and a half year before. The sobriquet with which he christened himself first came to police notice when one of the banks he looted in the city bore the name scrawled on the white-painted wall beside the vault. The police did not make public the self-dubbed nickname of the fancier of the feathered pseudonym, but planned his capture through his jesting method.

He was no better than the usual run of crooks and had such redeeming traits as are dormant in his breed. But he hated the police, a hatred that was hereditary. Born and brought up in the environments of the crime-steeped underworld, he branched out on his career at the early age of twelve. From then on it was in again and out again until every jailer for miles around could figure nearly to the day that Carl Bradway would be their "guest."

Then Carl's father, "Slug" Bradway, was killed by Detective O'Neil in a running fight after Bradway had slugged and robbed a sailor on the waterfront. But before he died he had shot the detective. His father's death intensified the "Hawk's" hatred until the sight of a "bull' would drive him into a snarling rage.

It was then that Haley, rawboned, square-jawed and brutal Haley, who had been Pat O'Neil's partner, set out to get even with "Slug's" son. He got his revenge by framing him on a minor job, planting a gun on him, and grinned with gratification when the venerable judge droned out a sentence of ten years. It was the longest stretch he ever got.

But sentencing Carl Bradway and keeping him within prison walls were two entirely different things. He had never crushed out before, but this time his one aim in life was to make a break for liberty, and break he did. And he got away with it. Then began a series of bank robberies, the mysterious name "Hawk" left behind, and the vigilant police surprised him at his work the night before.

It was a dismal morning. Outside was a gray pall of fog, through which the first light of dawn percolated but feebly. In the scraggly elm that reared its misshapened trunk by the back of the house the strident chatter of many sparrows apprised Bradway that he had overslept.

"Outa luck," he grunted again with disgust.

It had been his intention to make a break before dawn, slip down to the dock where a liner was tied up that would be flying her blue-peter in the morning, and stow away—and thus secure his liberty.

But now it was too late for such a move, for well he knew that with the approach of the new day he could never reach the dock without running foul of a flock of detectives whom he was quite as anxious to give the go-by as they would be to get their op-

tics on him. Overtly there was nothing to do but to lay low for the day in this hide-out of his and wait for the cloak of darkness of another night before he sallied forth.

A most disagreeable gnawing in the pit of his stomach brought potently to his mind the fact that he had not broken his fast since morning the day before. It was evident if he were to stay here for another ten or more hours he must lay in a store of food. He gazed through the dirty cellar window at the littered back yards across the narrow alley, cursing himself roundly meanwhile for sleeping until the birth of the new day had obliterated the sheltering darkness.

But there was something at least in his favor—it was foggy. That alone was decidedly better than a serene fine morning would have been. Furthermore, if he intended to lay in that stock of hunger-appeaser, he would have to make it snappy. The sooner he ventured forth and acquired what he needed the better it would be for him, for every fleeting second the gray dawn was waxing stronger.

"I've gotta make it," he snarled, pulling his cap over his eyes.

Then, feline-like, he crept to the cellar door that opened into the back yard and gingerly drew it open. Suddenly he glided across the area of the deserted yard into the alley and skulked along close to the fence. The fog carried with it a snapping chill that nipped him sharply. And to add to his misery there came wafting through the doleful mist from some house farther down the line the tormenting aroma of coffee and fried bacon.

"Ain't it tough!" exclaimed the "Hawk."

Then warily he made his way down the narrow alley, reached an intersected one that led to the street, and halted there to peer through the mist the while he listened for any suspicious sounds. All seemed well. Then another automobile shrieked its horn far up the street. That was the only sound to break the silence. The "Hawk" jerked the cap yet lower on his forehead and strode furtively down the street.

A few blocks below was a one-arm lunch-room which never locked its doors. He knew it was there and that it kept open all night. In its direction he wended his way, the turbulent craving in the base of his stomach being all the sharper now that his hunger seemed in a fair way soon to be satisfied. He had advanced but a half block when a colossal figure stepped from the shadow of a doorway, and as the man stood thus he looked at the cracksman and ejaculated:

"Ah! It's you, Bradway!"

Simultaneously his hand flew to his hip pocket.

In that winged instant Bradway recognized the other. He was no other than Brady, an inspector from headquarters. That same gentleman was an intrepid police officer of great skill. He was a young man about the same age as the fugitive. In fact, they attended the same school when they were boys.

The "Hawk" gave him one look, jumped one side, then tore into a stride like a runner at the snap of the starter's revolver, and legged it down the street at a breakneck speed. Behind him came the pounding of heavy footsteps in labored pursuit. A commanding voice called on him to "halt," and when he ignored the pursuer's order a gun commenced roaring wickedly, and its leaden pellets went humming perilously past his head, some of them nearly singeing his hair.

Bradway reached the next cross-street which led into Atlantic avenue, turned into it and dashed for the waterfront. Evidently Brady had emptied his revolver, as the shooting ceased, but still the detective held doggedly to the pursuit. Moreover, he now was shouting to bring up reinforcements.

Indeed, even as the "Hawk" sped towards the yawning dock at the end of the street a ponderous form sprang at him from an alleyway, but he sidestepped him dexterously and renewed his sprint for liberty. The burly figure was his arch-enemy, Inspector Haley. Now the officer's voice was calling on him to stop, and again there was the bark of a revolver and the hum of bullets through the air. But now Bradway was close to the goal. In a second he was across the avenue, and with a bound cleared the iron fence which railed the edge of the side-

walk and dove into the sluggish water with a splash.

After a few strokes under water he arose to the surface in the obscurity beneath the pier gaspingly. His temples drummed and his overtaxed heart hammered madly against his ribs as he shook the water from his smarting eyes and twined his arms about one of the slimy piles.

He noted that the tide was on the ebb. It surged past where he was regaining his nearly spent energy with sluggish ripples. It would be the height of indiscretion to stay beneath the pier any longer than necessary, for he knew that the police boat "Guardian" would come steaming up in answer to the headquarters men's summons, and his temporary haven beneath the pier was the first place they would search.

To make an effort to go downstream would be dangerous. With the water receding they would assuredly explore all the piers in that direction. There was but one thing to do, he concluded; he would swim upstream under water and against the ebbing flow, making his way from one pier to another. He must continue this incessantly until his strength failed. In that direction lay his only salvation to escape the minions of the law.

He hesitated only long enough for his heart to cease throbbing and the stifling ache to go from his lungs. Then, inhaling a deep breath, he snapped his teeth together grimly, relinquished his hold on the slippery pile, and sank beneath the surface. It seemed years that he struggled against Neptune's alternating currents. His head seemed on the point of bursting, his struggling legs and arms were half-paralyzed when he risked coming to the surface. With a long, drawn-out sigh of relief he discovered that he was under the adjoining wharf. After several moments he again submerged, and so he laboriously fought his way to the next pier.

By this time, plainly speaking, he was all in. When he bobbed to the surface he had barely strength left to cling to the slippery cross-piece between two piles. He was breathing painfully, a million sharp pains were pricking his exhausted body. He would have to rest before trying to proceed any farther. He then slowly and with almost superhuman effort drew himself up onto the cross-piece. Here he slumped wearily, his back against the pile and his dripping feet dangling over the surface of the water.

In the darkness he could discern but little—just the grotesque outlines of the repellent-looking piles and the green glint of swirling water beneath his sodden shoes. The water was cold, and he shivered and cursed in his misery. Above his head was another stringpiece. If he could reach it he could rest there, farther away from the water and doubly secure. He stood erect with a suppressed groan and reached up one hand. As he did so he heard a loud cry and a violent splashing of water, then another cry. With a curse he craned his head forward, but in the gloom he could not perceive anything. Again the splashing, this time followed by a distinct cry for help.

The "Hawk" gripped the cross-piece until his fingernails sunk into the spongy water-logged wood.

"Damn you, there!" he cursed as loud as he dared; "close that yap o' yours; do ya get me? Can that squeaking or I'll slip a knife into ya!"

"Lend me a hand, Bradway," pleaded a voice he well knew. "Quick, man, I'm drowning!"

Bradway nearly tumbled from his perch at the discovery. Was it possible that it was a hallucination, that the mental and physical strain on his overwrought mind had brought on disastrous complications? He strained his eyes through the darkness. Dimly, as his staring eyes became more familiarized to the gloom, he saw clinging to a pile a few feet ahead of him a pair of flabby hands. It was Inspector Haley, his face pasty with terror and his eyes bulging. The "Hawk" lowered himself down on the cross-piece again and through slited eyelids watched the officer gloatingly.

"You're in a nice fix," he sneered. "Tumbled off th' dock, eh? Well, you're there t' stay, Haley, unless yo' swim out."

Bradway grinned maliciously.

"I can't swim a stroke," was the terrified reply.

The "Hawk's" eyes were reptilian when he spoke:

"Say, yo, listen t' me, yo' fathead! You an' Brady were after me for th' Skillings job. You're a wise guy, Haley, I don't think. You framed me for my last stretch just 'cause my dad bumped off your side-kick. Now you comes snooping 'round, wise that I'd head this way, an' takes a flop into the big drink, an' expect *me* t' help yer. A fat chance! You know that Skillings checked out since I plugged him. You know what you guys'll do t' me if yous get yer glub-hooks on me. Why, there wouldn't be enough left of the 'Hawk' t' stand trial. I've got a score t' settle wid you, too, an' dis is as good a time as any."

The unfortunate headquarters man seemed not to have heard.

"Help me, Bradway, will ya?" he pleaded wildly. "I can't hold out much longer. Do and I'll———"

His hold slipped and he sank beneath the surface, only to reappear again, sputtering and hanging on frantically.

"Try it again, Haley," taunted Bradway. "I'm itchin' ter see yer drown."

"Help!" the inspector gasped in pitiful tones.

"Curse you, Haley; open dat yap o' yours again an' I'll bean ya! Get me?" the "Hawk" hissed. "Hear dat toot? You know what dat is. Dat's th' launch of th' 'Guardian.' Brady's wised them up dat I'm 'round here somewhere, an' they're moochin' 'bout lookin' for me. Sorry dat you can't enjoy th' big show if they get me."

"Say," the officer's voice gurgled hoarsely. "I'm about gone, Bradway. For God's sake think of my three little motherless children! I'm going—tell——"

These words soaked into the crook's brain and made him hesitate and think.

With a muttered execration Bradway slipped into the water and with a few strong strokes was at the drowning man's side as he thought of those children. Somehow he hated to think of them being left fatherless, to grow up in poverty and perhaps go to the devil as he had done.

"You big yellow brute, you know what's comin' t' me when I'm arrested," bellowed the "Hawk," and he shook a doubled-up fist in Haley's face. "I'll get mine good an' plenty. I won't have a Chinaman's chance. I ain't th' first poor dub that was jumped on. I'm savin' de bird dat's tried t' keep me in stir for a ten stretch! But tain't fer you, you big stiff! It's the kiddies. I couldn't think of dem gettin' th' bumps dat I got when I was a kid. When you get in your kicks at me when the big show comes off, think of th' cold water an' th' slippery piles."

For a fleeting second the "Hawk" listened intently. Then another screech from the whistle of the police launch animated him to action.

"Hear dat, don't ya? See dat black streak churnin' through th' water? Dat spells my finish. Break away from dat pile an' put dem paws of yours on my shoulders. Steady there. Don't grab like dat or I'll let you go. Dat's right—easy. You're all jake now. Hold fast. I'll tow you out of here, an' den you belch like hell for help. Your pals'll pick us up."

Co-operation in Crime Suppression

Richard E. Enright, Police Commissioner of New York and Head of the International Police Chiefs' Organization, Outlines a Comprehensive Plan in An Interview with EDWIN A. GOEWEY.

"BLACK BART, the Younger brothers, the James boys and others of their ilk who, in the misty past, increased mightily the hazards of banking and railroading in the somewhat extended territory formerly referred to as the 'Wild West,' long since disappeared from the spotlight as the country's most daring criminals.

"But sensational crime in the United States did not disappear with their exit. Quite the contrary.

"In recent years a far more dangerous and skilful type of crook has taken their places, and so much better educated, intelligent and resourceful are the modern outlaws than their notorious predecessors, so much more clever are they in taking advantage of the latest in science and invention as a substitute for rough methods, that even the police of the larger cities, both here and abroad, often are hard put to bring them to book. In fact, so many of the most dangerous of the modern criminals succeed in avoiding detection and punishment for long periods that one cannot help wondering, at times, if police methods are keeping pace with the ingenuity of these denizens of the underworld."

The foregoing statement was made by Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright, director of the New York police force and head of the organization of police chiefs of the world. For years he has been endeavoring to perfect a system of international police co-operation that will put at least a fifty per cent. check on crime, and what he says in this article followed the recent International Police Conference in the American metropolis, when action taken brought his dream of world-wide partnership in criminal hunting a long step nearer to realization.

"There is just one sure way to beat the crooks," the commissioner continued, "and that is, keep ahead of them. With the police departments of all civilized nations acting as a unit crime soon would lose one-half of its current popularity, and the prisons everywhere would be reporting full houses. Such a step is necessary, and we are getting nearer and nearer to its fulfilment. If Jesse James or Black Bart were alive to-day and attempted to perform as they did when in their prime they would be behind bars or dead in jig-time. There never was any finesse in the methods of the old-line criminals. Ruthlessness and terrorism were what carried them through.

"There are some persons who believe that the easiest and quickest method for the elimination of crime is to round up the known criminals, load them on trains and vessels and ship them elsewhere. That remedy is on a par with the commission of crime. If a locality had yellow fever or smallpox, and attempted to combat the scourge by sending the afflicted to other places, it would have the remainder of the country down upon it in next to no time.

"Personally, I list crime as a disease, and it can't be cured by sending the sufferers away. The way to bring about real betterment is to apprehend the crooks and con-

fine them. Crime and disease must be kept under lock and key.

"In every part of the world to-day much is being said about the so-called crime waves. Particularly is this true in this country. There are several reasons for the abundance of crime in the last year, but one of the principal ones is that the method of exchanging information between the police department is little short of chaotic.

"Throughout the United States practically all such departments are municipal and each a unit in itself. Each has its own bureau of records, indexed information and research; some very good and others exceedingly poor. At present there is a sad lack of co-operation between these departments, and this lack of united effort goes a long way toward aiding the crooks.

"In addition we must face the fact that the criminals have taken advantage of all modern conveniences, particularly the automobile and other speedy means of transportation, the telegraph, the telephone and radio, that practically all law-breakers carry firearms, instead of the knife and blackjack of yesterday, and that they do not hesitate to shoot on the slightest provocation. When the criminal had to trust to his legs for his get-away he feared the noise of a pistol report. Now, with an automobile with engine running at hand, he shows no hesitancy in shooting.

"Suspended sentences, paroles, bonding companies which do a considerable business with crooks, lawyers who know how to delay cases and procure witnesses who will swear to any alibi they are told to are of material assistance to the criminals. Too great leniency and lax methods in certain quarters have served to encourage malefactors. However, the police of this country have not been standing around bemoaning adverse conditions. On the contrary, they have been planning night and day to make the lot of the crook harder, and if a scheme now under way reaches the point we anticipate the outlaw of the future is not going to find the going so easy.

"This scheme calls for the establishment of a central clearing house for crime data, probably at Washington. A bill to create such a bureau has been prepared, and it is possible that it will be introduced in the next Congress. Already it has the backing of all police departments, many chambers of commerce, surety companies and associations of bankers, manufacturers and other business men. It is to be non-political, will create no offices except those of clerks to man the bureau and will leave each separate police department autonomous, as at present. The plan has been discussed and amended at two successive international conferences of police chiefs, and now is ready for launching.

"New York has one of the best police identification and record bureaus in the country, and Chicago, Philadelphia and some other cities have good ones. But no one city has all the information we possess, and we haven't the information at their disposal. It requires no argument to prove how much better off all of the departments of the country would be if all of them had duplicate information, photographs and fingerprint and measurement records.

"It has been estimated that the establishment of a central clearing house such as suggested would not cost more than $250,000, and it could be operated for about $200,000 annually, inclusive of all salaries and overhead. And each year the government would save more than the cost of operation through having at hand information which otherwise it would have to dig up; and the bureau actually would be the means of saving millions in money and other things to the general public, as well as diminishing the crimes in which life is taken.

"In addition the bureau would assist all of the government departments, such as the Secret Service, the post-office department and the intelligence bureaus of the army and navy, and these latter, other than in exceptional cases where the exigencies of the government made other action necessary, would be required to make the records full and complete. This is the manner in which the crime detection departments of Continental Europe operate.

"Let us suppose, for sake of argument, that the bureau at Washington has been established, experienced clerks employed

and the necessary filing systems installed. Immediately all of the country's police departments would forward for filing copies of all photographs, records, fingerprints, etc., and from that time they would keep the bureau informed promptly of everything of a criminal nature which came to their notice.

"At the same time the bureau would make duplicates of everything sent in which would be of general use and distribute them to the police departments throughout the United States. The central bureau could be called upon at all times for additional information.

"Here are some specific lines along which the central bureau would be extremely useful to the several police departments:

"At the present time the police are not properly notified when criminals are turned loose from penal institutions, either when they have completed their sentences or have been released on parole. In most cases the offenders are set at liberty without even the authorities in the city from which they were sent being apprised of the fact. Under the proposed system the central bureau would be notified days in advance of any prisoner's release, the fact would be sent broadcast, and thus the authorities everywhere would be on the watch—not to hound the freed person, but to see that he did not return to his former haunts and his crook associates and take part in some new crime venture. In short, any person once convicted of a crime would have a much harder time than at present of dropping out of sight and continuing to break the laws under new names and in different surroundings. His or her record would be on file throughout the country, always ready to trip them up if a false step were made.

"The new system also would result in the various police departments being strictly up to date in the matter of photographs, fingerprints and measurements. Many of the crooks keep moving from place to place, and while New York may have a recent photograph of a criminal, San Francisco and Chicago may have no picture taken within the last ten or fifteen years.

"Now I come to another and equally important matter. To-day there is no real reciprocity between the police departments of this country and those of Europe. If we desire to learn about the past of a criminal from England or Ireland, we communicate with Scotland Yard. Anything about a French crook is obtained from the Paris headquarters and so on. But if the police on the other side want to know anything about an American criminal they may be compelled to communicate with a dozen or more cities here and then not get what they want. With a central bureau in the United States we could supply the authorities in other countries without delay.

"In time I hope we shall go even further and arrange to exchange information concerning all major crooks between our central bureau and those maintained in foreign capitals. That would take time to arrange, but in the interim no person from another country should be permitted to come here until our consular representatives had inquired from the police of his location and ascertained if the man or woman in question had a criminal record. No passports should be vised unless the applicants could show clean slates. For a considerable period the pickings in Europe have been pretty poor and foreign criminals, including the radicals, have been making their way to America. We could hold off most such undesirables under a proper system of co-operation with the authorities abroad.

"There also should be co-ordination of the penal laws of the entire country, which to-day differ greatly in the various states. It is harder to-day to extradite a criminal from some of the states than it is from Europe. With all of the states having similar laws and identical penalties the criminals would know what to expect, and enforcement of all laws would be easier.

"Probably the traffic laws are the most glaring example. There are different laws in each of the forty-eight states, which is all wrong. A person should be able to drive a car from here to San Francisco without breaking a single regulation unless it were done deliberately.

"With the central bureau in operation, immediately following the arrest of a per-

son for a serious crime, all departments throughout the country should be notified, and any such having information in addition to that on file in all bureaus should forward it to the point of arrest without delay. In a similar manner all departments should be notified concerning captured stolen goods, thereby making recovery by the persons plundered easier than at present. And whenever things of value are stolen all departments should be notified, making it harder for the crooks to take the articles to points distant from the scene of the crime and dispose of them.

"In the old days the anarchists and other radicals made it a practice to be 'on the job' in numbers when an outrage was perpetrated. To-day they are wiser, the plans are made at a distance and only one or two persons are sent to execute them. Under the central bureau system there would be an immediate check-up on all of these gentry in the country, all would be kept under surveillance, and when one or more of them moved to a new habitat, news of their flitting would be flashed immediately.

"Similarly the police could keep track of all 'dope' users known to the authorities, and all large shipments of narcotics from abroad could be traced, co-operation on the other side, of course, being necessary for this.

"What I have outlined constitutes a considerable program and, if carried out, will do much to handicap the crooks and decrease crime in the immediate future.

"But we, the police heads of the world, have no intention of stopping there. We are working to bring to our aid the best that science has to give to curb the outlaws, and to us the outlook is most encouraging. In the scientific detection of crime Europe is way ahead of this country, but in America we are studying and learning and some day will take our place in line with the authorities across the water. I never realized how much there was to the scientific side of police work until I made my tour of inspection of the police departments of the European capitals. I noted the experiments being conducted there first hand and the instruments and methods already perfected, and from the day that I reached home I have been working for the introduction of similar schemes and devices here. For months men of the New York police department have been busy acquainting themselves with the scientific methods in use in Europe and, even though other American cities may hesitate for a time about adopting them, they will be in operation in the metropolis before a great while.

"And once we begin using them in New York, the other cities will fall in line, just as they have followed us in the past. The New York department was the first to adopt the European system of measurements and fingerprinting, and we inaugurated the first comprehensive system of regulating traffic. We are willing to take the lead again in a good cause.

"Another thing of which every one may rest assured: once a department for scientific crime detection is established in the metropolis it will be maintained strictly up-to-date, and we will take advantage of and adopt every improvement made by the Europeans, who are making this branch of police work a life study.

"Already many of the devices, novel in their nature and the result of long research and experiment, are being used with considerable success, but there is a great deal more to be done before something akin to perfection is reached. So far, however, most gratifying results have been achieved in transmitting fingerprints, portraits and pictures of places and things by wire.

"Now let us consider the various scientific devices in order. Everybody knows that the police departments throughout the world have, for a considerable period, been using the system of descriptions and measurements brought out by that famous criminologist, Louis Adolphe Bertillon, but not so many know that to-day in Europe these are being exchanged regularly by telegraph, telephone and radio.

"Then we come to photographs of persons, places and articles having a bearing on crime committed, as well as fingerprint records. These formerly were exchanged by mail and messengers with a fair degree of speed. To-day many of the European

police departments, by means of instruments that rapidly are nearing perfection, are being sent by telegraph, telephone and radio. Once the devices are improved to a 100 per cent. standard it will be possible to send all the things mentioned in a very brief period of time to any part of the earth where there is a telegraph or a wireless station.

"A criminal, man or woman, commits a crime somewhere in the United States—say a murder—and gets away. If the Washington crime bureau were in existence the work of tracing the fugitive would be conducted from there. If, however, the New York city departments were the only ones in America properly equipped with scientific instruments, we would function.

"In a short time the police forces of the world would be notified by one of the wire routes or by radio of the details of the crime, supplied with a portrait of the person wanted and given his fingerprints and physical description. With this information in the hands of the authorities everywhere any crook would have a difficult time avoiding arrest for a long time, particularly as reproductions of his likeness could be made at all points in a brief time and distributed to the newspapers for publication. Even if the identity of the criminal were unknown, but a fingerprint was obtained, that could be sent broadcast and would be a splendid clue.

"In the matter of transmitting fingerprints the experts on the other side have reduced the system to a mighty fine point. Not only are they able to send by wire and radio almost perfect reproductions of fingerprints, but some of the clever ones have devised a simple code for the purpose. A police scientist named Johansen, a resident of Copenhagen, insists that he was the inventor of the code system for sending fingerprints, but many accept the statement of Charles Stockley Collins, for many years in charge of the fingerprint bureau at Scotland Yard, that he originated the system, and he now has it so nearly perfected that he has published a book on the subject which is being distributed to the police of the world.

"Collins and his associates really are geniuses, for they have bettered the work of all other experts by inventing a system by which a person can be identified positively if but a single print of either thumb or any of the fingers is obtained. We still try to obtain prints of both thumbs and all fingers, and many experts, until recently, have considered a thumbprint absolutely essential. Collins's efforts are going to change all this. The code is too intricate for any one but a student of the system to understand, but the only instrument required, other than the sending apparatus, is a specially and readily constructed reading-glass, with a fixed focus and a transparent window at its base. Across the window, near the centre, are drawn two very fine lines, parallel and six millimetres apart, joined by a third line, perpendicular to both.

"The apparatus for transmitting checks, photographs, drawings, etc., was perfected by Professor Arthur Korn. Last year several successful experiments were conducted with this apparatus at considerable distances without relays. These were between Rome and Naples, between Rome and the battleship *Andrea Doria* and the torpedo chaser *La Masa,* and from Rome to Massowah, Africa and vice versa by the wireless method. Immediately following these tests the Italian government bought a concession for its use. I was told in Rome that representatives of the army and navy of the United States also have witnessed special demonstrations, and that not only did they give their approval, but that arrangements were begun to use the Korn method.

"For the transmission of prints, etc., by the telautographic method it is necessary to have special transmitting and receiving apparatus, but both are easily worked and easily transported. For the wireless method it is necessary to have a specially built apparatus, in which is incorporated a modified writing machine.

"Summing up the entire situation, I feel that I am justified in stating that, thanks to the co-operation that has been going on between the police heads of the world, Mr. and Miss Crook are going to find their existence far less pleasant than in the past."

The House Where Dead Men Live

By FREDERICK C. DAVIS

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

PHANTOMS

IT was three o'clock of a silent dark morning that Jerry Boyle trudged along that quiet street. He was wearily winding his way home from work; that night he had expended a great amount of energy in reporting in every detail for the *Press* the suicide of Harlen Rowbeck, financier. His path was intensely dark; the only sound that echoed through it was the thudding of his own heels on the pavement. Then his feet stepped from concrete to soft dirt, and he knew he was passing in front of the Empty Shell.

The Empty Shell was the derisive name given by the neighborhood to a large, dismantled, rambling structure, an old dwelling of Southern colonial period, rotting, dreary, unoccupied—and said to be *haunted*.

Jerry Boyle chuckled to himself. Haunted! Ghosts! Phantoms! Spectres! All bunk — all superstitious tomfoolery — all bumkum!

His meditations were suddenly cut short. He was passing squarely in front of the hollow, falling-apart structure, when from the blackness over his head a dark arm shot, an invisible arm swung downward and cracked a very material blackjack against his head. Jerry Boyle lurched limply to the ground, supinely unconscious.

Boyle's body went through a strange experience. Unseen hands lifted it from the ground, carried it across the plot of dirt extending between the eerie structure, and lugged him up the steps and across its hollow porch. As though floating through the air Boyle's limp body was slowly carried by invisible bearers into a front room of the house. Then the spectral hands lowered him, still unconscious, to the floor, and left him there.

A long, blank period swam slowly through Boyle's mind. Then his eyelids fluttered, opened, shut again, opened once more and peered unseeingly into utter blackness.

He struggled up. Something pulled him back. He struggled to rise again, and something in that terrible darkness prevented him. He sat, gasping, very weak. His head throbbed excruciatingly. He looked all around. Through a window, lighted by the spectral glow of the feeble moon outside, Boyle saw a familiar residence. Then he realized that he was inside the Empty Shell!

He moved to rise, and invisible hands pushed him back. Infuriated, he struck out into the darkness, hit nothing, but received in return a dazing blow just behind the ear! The unseen foe lurking in the dark was merciless.

Boyle sank back to the dirty, trash-strewn floor, bewildered. Who had hit him? Why had they brought him in here? Even as these questions swarmed to his brain he was conscious of a voice speaking. He stared, wide-eyed, across the dark floor of the black room.

A voice, weak, faint, distant, wailing, was speaking as though through a heavy curtain far away. Boyle sat perfectly still listening. Now the moaning voice was growing louder, words were forming in ghostly tones, the voice was coming closer, closer. Boyle sat and listened, entranced, to the mysterious voice issuing from the very air about him.

The wailing voice, with great difficulty, pronounced:

"O-o-oh! O-o-oh! I'm—try-ing—try-ing—try-ing. It's—tor-ture—tor-ture! Can—you—see—me—now?"

The hairs on Boyle's head stirred and bristled. The voice sounded like that of an invisible being—a spirit—a voice from another world. Boyle continued to stare, fascinated, into the dark.

Then suddenly, at the other end of the room, a faint light began to glow.

The light hung four feet above the floor, like a small, misty cloud, moving slightly, rolling, twisting, growing larger and larger, slowly. While the shifting cloud of luminous vapor continued to swell the ghostly voice continued moaningly:

"Can—you—see—me—now? Can—you—see—me—now? I'm—try-ing—try-ing! Can—you—see——"

Boyle was staring, his brain reeling, at the rolling, twisting cloud of shining vapor at the other end of the room. The form was elongating, stretching out, growing larger, larger; the bottom was reaching the floor, the top was rising to the height of an ordinary man, and all the while the ghostly voice continued to come seemingly from the air of the room in the vicinity of the cloud!

At the same time Boyle was conscious of a biting, choking, dusty, musty smell—an almost tangible substance—that was permeating the air of the room and making breathing difficult.

The wailing voice continued: "I'm—try-ing! Can—you—see—me—now?"

Jerry Boyle stared ahead, fixed to the spot.

"Can—you—see—me—now? *Look!*"

Boyle yelled. The twisting cloud now was swaying, like a man—moving from side to side, as though in intense pain. Then the bottom half of the misty cloud split, forming legs; a head appeared, arms, hands, the face, nose, mouth, eyes—eyes that stared directly at Boyle were materializing out of the air, slowly and uncertainly!

The voice moaned: "Can—you—see—me—now? I am—I am—I am Harlen Rowbeck. Harlen—Rowbeck!"

Harlen Rowbeck! Boyle gulped. Rowbeck had that day killed himself in his own office! Boyle had himself seen the dead body—a great hole in the forehead. And here was a phantom form speaking from nothingness, calling itself Rowbeck!

Boyle stared at the forehead. Merciful heaven, there in the *thing's* forehead was a hole, just as had been in the head of the dead man!

"Har-len — Row-beck!" The ghostly voice was dying away.

Then suddenly, like the crisis of a hysterical dream it seemed to Boyle, three shots cracked out in the house. Immediately a long, blood-chilling shriek sounded; a loud thumping echoed through the house. Two more shots cracked. Then, from the darkness before the trembling Boyle, a light flashed and threw a blinding beam on him.

"Hello!" a deep voice exclaimed.

The light turned and flashed around the room. A man was flashing it. Boyle could see his silhouette against the opposite wall when the circle of light from the man's flashlight swept over it. The light swept across the room and across the opposite wall. The room was filled with a queer, dry smoke, a suffocating fume that hung in the air. But, as the light flashed across the opposite wall, no sign of a phantom was visible!

The man turned to Boyle again and flashed his light on the reporter. Boyle with a great effort struggled to his feet. He doubled his fists, ready to leap upon the man with the light.

"Who the devil are you?" he flashed.

"Whoa, Boyle! No need for a fight. I'm your friend Jones—Harlington Jones, you know, of headquarters."

To prove his statement he turned his light in his own face and disclosed to the astounded Boyle the face of the man he claimed to be—Harlington Jones, star detective of police headquarters.

CHAPTER TWO

JONES'S STORY

JERRY BOYLE stared in consternation at the face of his friend as the other disclosed his identity.

"What in Heaven's name are you doing here?" he demanded. "Jones, you experimenting, snooping ape, what are you doing here at this time——"

"Just a minute, Jerry. I can ask you that myself."

Boyle rubbed a swelling knot on his head ruefully. A lump was rapidly forming where the blackjack had struck his cranium.

"Sandbagged you, eh?" Jones laughed. "Well, I have a little story to tell myself. Let's get out of this place first."

Together, glancing over their shoulders at rapid intervals for any lurking hider that might be waiting for them, they found their way to the street door, opened it and pounded across the echoing porch. They tramped down the steps and across the bare stretch of broken ground that lay between the house and the street.

"Pleasant place!" Jones exclaimed sarcastically as he turned and viewed the structure.

Boyle rubbed his head.

"Rowbeck killed himself to-day, didn't he?" Jones asked Boyle thoughtfully.

"He did!"

"Yet the—the thing we saw in there claimed to be Rowbeck, didn't it?"

"It did!"

"Do you believe that, Jerry?"

Jerry Boyle snorted. "I saw it!" he declard. "Jones, I sat on that floor and saw a dead man form out of nothing more than a cloud that at first was as big as an orange and floated in the air! How do you explain that?"

"It does look spooky, doesn't it?"

"I tell you it's real!"

"Jerry, you don't mean——"

"Look!"

Boyle raised his hand and pointed straight at the porch of the rotting structure they had left. Slinking lithely across the porch were two mammoth black cats. As they moved they cried slowly and mournfully. They halted and turned eyes on Boyle and Jones that glowed greenly.

"Let's get away from here!" Boyle choked. "Those damn cats! I hate them!"

He turned and walked swiftly away, Jones striding along beside him, smiling slightly. Under the arc-light at the corner Boyle halted and mopped his forehead with an already damp handkerchief.

"Jones," he gasped, "this—this is uncanny!"

Jones's smile widened. "I haven't told you how it came that I was there. Listen:

"To-day a stool-pigeon brought me a note that was supposed to have been intercepted while passing between two crooks, one of whom pulled a burglary last night. The note stated that if Number Two would meet Number One at the Empty Shell to-night at three they would divide the swag.

"When three o'clock came I was there. I waited. No crooks came. I was wandering about through the rooms, when suddenly unseen hands pushed me into a closet which I was at that instant passing. Instantly the door was slammed shut and I was a prisoner.

"I tried to break out, but could not. Then, strangely enough, after a moment the door slowly swung open of its own accord and I was free again.

"I stepped through two rooms and then came upon that thing in the room that said it was Rowbeck!"

"It's mighty strange!" Boyle asserted.

"What's strange?" Jones demanded placidly.

"Why! Something hit me on the head and carried me into that place. Why was that done to me? Do you think that anything human would have done that? Do you think that ghost was a fake? That wasn't any draped sheet stunt! That ghost was vapor and came right out of the air. You shot at it, didn't you?"

"I did."

"The instant you shot it disappeared, didn't it? Did you look to see where your shots hit?"

"All five went directly through the thing."

"You're sure of that?"

"I'm a sure shot, Jerry, even when I'm excited, and I'd swear every bullet of mine passed completely through that phantom!"

"There you are!" Boyle declared breathlessly. "It's not real, I tell you!"

Jones seemed to consider. "You'll play

this up big in the *Press* to-morrow, I suppose?"

"I most certainly will."

"Your editor will certainly eat it up. Now, listen, Jerry. We're certainly on to something here. I'll give you exclusive rights to publish my statements and stuff if you'll promise to work with me as I wish."

"I'll do that, of course!"

"Very well. You can tell everything you saw to-night. To-morrow afternoon at four meet me here on this corner. Arm yourself. We'll investigate that house. In the meanwhile I'll post sentries all around it to make sure no one leaves or enters it during the day. Is it a go?"

"It is. To-morrow at four."

Mopping his damp forehead nervously, Boyle turned in the direction of his rooms, while Jones smiled after him as his form was blended with the blackness.

CHAPTER THREE

AT FOUR

AT four o'clock sharp the next day Harlington Jones stopped at the designated corner and joined Jerry Boyle, who had been impatiently waiting for him.

"Plenty of publicity you gave that place in your write-up this morning!" Jones declared as they began striding rapidly down the street.

"Wait until the evening edition!" Boyle said. "I'm expecting to get something more this trip."

They halted before the old dismantled Empty Shell and stared at it as though trying to pierce the mystery of the phantom form that so mysteriously appeared in one of its rooms the night before.

The house was a large one, Colonial type, once white, but now a dirty, spotted gray. One column was split; another leaned as the top of the porch had swayed to one side. The whole presented a twisted appearance, as though it were ready to collapse on the shortest notice. It was a disreputable structure in an orderly neighborhood.

A large ground, grassless and trash-strewn, spread around it. Inside the rooms were filth and trash, dust, cobwebs. Plaster had crumbled and fallen from the walls, laths were broken, doors twisted off—and through all a musty, dry smell permeated.

Jones and Boyle together mounted the stair and crossed the porch, their footfalls echoing hollowly. They entered the front room and looked at its trash-strewn floor. Into the next room they went and paused. It was in this room that the phantom had appeared.

Boyle stood to one side, watching Jones as he swung into action.

Jones stared at the floor at approximately the spot where the specter had appeared. No footprints were visible—only a smooth, unbroken stretch of floor, thickly covered with dust. Then Jones turned his attention to the wall. One by one he found five bullet holes. Each of his five bullets had seemingly passed *through* the specter and had imbedded themselves in the wall behind!

Then the detective gave his attention to the wall. He dropped on his knees and peered at the very bottom of the wall. His keen eyes found a very thin layer of white dust, which lay in a delicate film over the cracks at the lower edge of the wall. He straightened and wetted one finger, touched it gingerly to the white film, then placed his finger on his tongue. He nodded quickly, as though his suspicion were realized. Then he removed from his pocket a pen-knife. Working carefully, he scraped up a portion of the white, filmy powder. Then from his pocket he removed a black leather case, from which he lifted a small test tube. Into the test tube he dropped the white powder, corked it, replaced it in its case and stood again.

"What's that?" Boyle queried.

"Probably ordinary salt," Jones answered absently, turning and going to the opposite wall.

"Salt?" echoed Boyle blankly, but Jones ventured no more answers.

As he investigated they were surprised by a long, moaning wail. They turned. Both

black cats, with immense faces, were staring at them with their green eyes. For a moment the eyes of men and animals locked. Then Jones gave his attention to his work; with another wail the immense cats padded out of the room.

"Finding anything?" Boyle queried again.

"Think I'm taking my afternoon constitutional?" Jones snapped tartly, and Boyle subsided.

In a moment the detective finished. He turned and spoke to Boyle as though his mind were busily working on an unknown problem.

"Come here to-night," he said. "Something tells me there's going to be another ghost show."

As they walked from the Empty Shell a group of boys and one or two men watched them curiously. They had read the accounts of the ghost and were eager to see it.

CHAPTER FOUR

NIGHT

AT midnight sharp Detective Jones again met Boyle on the same corner. That afternoon the evening edition of the *Press* had given much prominence and space to the experience of its reporter in the Empty Shell. Accordingly many of the city folk were turning out to catch a glimpse of the phantom.

Outside the Empty Shell half a dozen automobiles were lined. Clusters of men and women conversing in low tones glanced now and then at the eerie structure. As time wore on more and more came. A few ventured on the porch and peered inside. One bold gentleman walked through the front room, while the watchers outside gasped at his courage. When midnight came fifty persons had gathered before the Empty Shell, eyeing it with curiosity and expectation.

Harlington Jones and Jerry Boyle, walking down the street, noted the crowd and crossed the thoroughfare. Standing apart from the rabble, a man was watching the house with a lack of interest. He lounged against the opposite building; as Jones approached he saluted respectfully.

"Evening, Wilson. How about it?" the officer asked.

"Nobody came, Mr. Jones. I watched all day from this side, and nobody went into the building except you and one curiosity seeker."

"All right. Quite a crowd here to see the ghost, I suppose, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jerry, we're going inside that house, but we don't want to plow through that mob. Follow me to the back door."

They retraced their steps, turned the corner, walked up the alley behind the Empty Shell, and paused. Another man was walking slowly up and down the alley, keeping his eyes on the building in which interest centred.

"Hello, Montgomery," Detective Jones greeted the man. "Been watching all day?"

"Yes, sir, and not a soul came near the old shell."

"You're positive, Monty?"

"Absolutely, Mr. Jones."

Together reporter and detective walked swiftly across the dark yard behind the haunted house. Just outside the door Boyle halted Jones with a remark.

"Nobody came here or nobody left here, did they? Well, then, if that ghost isn't real, how is it worked?"

"Be quiet, Boyle. Follow me."

They entered the house and went through a dismantled kitchen. As they progressed through dark and evil-smelling rooms, the plaster crumbling and laths naked, the floor littered with trash, a tingling, eerie sensation of impending incident seemed to pervade the atmosphere.

They entered the room silently where the specter had the night before appeared.

Together they crouched in one corner. Jones glanced at the face of his watch. It was twelve-thirty.

Through the window the knots of curious persons could be seen assembled outside. They moved about restlessly. Boyle, glancing out, saw several men whom he knew to be reporters on rival sheets. Then he

turned his attention inward again as Jones gripped his arm.

"Watch that!" the detective whispered.

He pointed through the semi-darkness at a lithe, black form which slunk across the floor. It was one of the large cats; it paused and mewed loudly, swinging its large head as though looking for its master. Then he padded slowly from the room.

"Follow that cat!" Jones commanded as he straightened and noiselessly went to the door through which the animal had passed.

Boyle followed silently.

They saw it turn and swing softly into the vestibule. It mewed loudly. Then it turned, retraced its steps and walked lithely toward the back part of the house. It went slowly into the kitchen, with Jones and Boyle following. The animal had not detected their presence.

The cat cried at the door. It was swinging ajar; the animal pushed its nose against it and opened it. Then he jumped to the ground outside. It hesitated, then began to go around the building. It padded silently around the building, almost invisible in the dark. Jones and Boyle followed it silently.

From the gloom cast by the side of the house they watched it glide away from the house and toward one of the knots of people. It mewed at them, but they paid no attention; it went to the next, and there it found the object of its hunt.

It paused, looked mournfully at the face of a man beside whom it had stopped and wailed. The man started, kicked at it and made frantic motions for it to return. The cat slunk away in the darkness.

"Watch that guy!" Jones commanded. "Keep an eye on him."

The man looked furtively about, then moved away. Jones slipped from the house, with Boyle close behind him. Together they reached the sidewalk as the man, glancing quickly from right to left, paced rapidly away.

Without exchanging a word Jones and Boyle began to skilfully shadow the man whom the black cat had selected.

CHAPTER FIVE

SECRECY

THE shadowed man walked rapidly down the street. Now and then he glanced at his watch. The detective and Boyle, on the opposite side of the street, followed him without once allowing him to slip from their vision. Then, after trailing the suspicious character for six blocks, he suddenly turned into an all-night drugstore situated on a corner.

Jones broke into a run and quickly came within half a block of the store, with Boyle right behind him.

"Wait outside!" the officer ordered as he slipped forward.

Boyle remained across the street, while Jones entered the drugstore in as nonchalant a manner as he could assume. The man of their quest was using the telephone.

Jones halted before a cigar case and bought a cigar, his ears alert for the words of the stranger, who was telephoning a few feet from him.

"One One One One," the man gave Central.

As Jones lighted his cigar connection was made.

The message was very brief:

"All right. Go ahead. Coming right over."

Then the man hung up the receiver, turned and trode from the store.

Jones stepped quickly to the phone and called Information.

"Who has Number One One One One?" he inquired quickly.

"Very sorry," Central answered after a pause. "That is a private line; we can't give you the party's name."

Jones swore under his breath. He turned and walked quickly from the store. Boyle had crossed the street; their quarry had gone around to the side of the drugstore and was again rapidly walking at right angles to his former course.

In three minutes the man halted. Jones and Boyle paused also, a little behind. The man glanced around, then entered an old building, obviously a rooming-house. With-

in a few moments Detective Jones and Boyle had halted before it. They had seen the man climb a flight of stairs.

"He's on the second floor. Rooms on only one side of the hall. Easy!" commented the detective.

They quickly went into the alley upon which the rooming-house stood. In the darkness they saw a fire-escape which zigzagged up the side of the building. Jumping, Jones caught the bottom ladder and pulled himself up to it.

"Wait there. I'll be down presently," he said to Boyle.

Jones toed up the ladder silently and came to the second floor. Raising his head cautiously, he peered into a room which was open to his view through a slit two inches wide, where the window shade had not been pulled all the way down.

The detective peered in deep interest at the scene inside. On a large table at the opposite side of the room sat various black, shining boxes, with dials, knobs, wires and switches on them. Jones knew at once that it was a very complete radio broadcasting station for sending messages through the ether.

Seated before the instrument was a man who was fingering the various knobs and adjustments. Jones could see that he was preparing to broadcast a message. As he fingered the various instruments a light above the table flashed and he arose.

He stepped to the door, unbolted it and admitted to the room the very man whom Jones had been shadowing.

As the door opened a dark form darted through the aperture. It was the black cat. Both men caught sight of it simultaneously and snarled their displeasure.

"Hang that cat!" Jones caught through the window. "Followed me—way—the house!"

"Kill him!" the other snarled.

"Put him in the cellar."

The two men arose and, gripping the cat by the loose skin at its neck, dragged it from the room. The room was now empty of human beings. Jones quickly extended his fingers and pushed at the window-sash. To his great elation it arose.

He peered through the crack. Yes, there was an ordinary telephone on a small table by the window.

He clambered quickly down the ladder.

"Jerry!" he called.

"Yes!"

"Run like lightning to that drugstore and call One One One One. Speed!"

Without questioning Boyle turned and ran at top speed through the darkness back toward the drugstore.

Meanwhile Jones remounted the ladder. He peered inside again and saw that the men had not as yet returned. Then he cautiously raised the sash higher. He yanked the shade upward. Just inside the window sat the telephone, with the box just below the sill. Jones reached his hand down and clamped it tightly over the bells of the instrument. When Boyle called it must make no sound.

A nerve-racking period of waiting passed. Jones held tightly to the telephone bells, muffling them. The men had gone to lock the cat in the big cellar and might at any minute return. What was keeping Boyle? Why didn't he call?

Through the open window Jones heard steps begin to ascend the stairs inside. The men were returning and Boyle hadn't called as yet!

Then the telephone bell rang clatteringly and muffled by Jones's hand.

Jones snatched the instrument from the table and whispered through it:

"Hello, Boyle!"

"Yes!"

"Listen! That's all; listen at the phone! No time to talk!"

As quickly as he could Jones picked a small peg of wood from his pocket and slipped it into the slot *under* the raised hook for the receiver. Then he replaced the receiver, but the hook, held up by the peg, did not shut off the current, but permitted Boyle to hear whatever words were spoken inside the room.

Like a flash, Jones replaced the instrument, pulled down the shade and shut the window.

No sooner had he done so than both men

re-entered the room and looked around suspiciously.

The man who had fingered the instruments went to the wall and petred long at a queer dial which hung there.

Then he turned to the other and nodded knowingly.

CHAPTER SIX

OVER THE WIRE

JERRY BOYLE had paused breathlessly outside the drugstore and gasped for air. Then he quickly entered and snatched up the telephone on the counter.

"One One One One," he asked of Central.

Immediately connection was made. Then Jones's whispering voice came to Boyle:

"Hello, Boyle!"

"Yes!" Boyle answered breathlessly.

"Listen! That's all; listen at the phone! No time to talk!"

"What? What're you doing——"

No answer came and Boyle settled to listening. He heard a door open and slam shut.

Finally voices came:

"Tuning her?" Number One asked.

Number Two grunted his answer.

A humming and whistling sound came through the receiver. Unknown to Boyle, it was the humming of the generator of the radio sending apparatus.

"Ready?" Number One asked.

"Just a minute. Now—talk."

A pause followed. Then, slowly and painfully in a wailing voice, came the words:

"O-o-oh! O-o-oh! I'm—try-ing—try-ing—try-ing. It's tor-ture—tor-ture! Can—you—see—me—now?"

Boyle started and paled. Coming over the wires was the same spectral voice he had heard in the Empty Shell the night before! But now Boyle knew the voice was material—the disguised voice of a human being, in the room which Detective Jones was watching.

The voice came again:

"Can—you—see—me—now? Can—you—see—me—now? I'm try-ing—try-ing—try-ing! Can—you——"

The voice continued wailingly, painfully. Now a grim sense of having been imposed on rose in Boyle. What was this nonsense? Who was imitating, so absurdly, the voice of a specter, if specters have voices? Why was this being done? Boyle's questions were drowning in the shock of surprise which followed the next wailing sentence over the wire:

"Can—you—see—me—now? Look! I am—I am—Henry—Smithson. Henry—Smithson!"

Boyle sneered. Henry Smithson was the name of a laborer who had died that day!

Then another silence followed. The humming sound ceased. Then naturally toned voices came again:

"That's bound to get 'em. At least sixty are out there waiting for the ghost! Every paper in town will feature it to-morrow. And to-morrow night we'll strike!"

"Shut up, you fool! Telling the world about it, eh?"

"Who's to hear——"

"Stop it! You know well enough! Look at that dial! You see what it registers?"

"You can get him, can't you?"

"Certainly. This switch. The dial automatically registers whenever a living person approaches outside this room. There is some one on the fire-escape platform now! But I throw this switch! There!"

A terrorized yell sent Boyle's heart thumping heavily and sent a chill shudder over his body.

"And hundreds of volts of electricity shoot through the fool's body—the fool on the platform!"

Boyle heard another painful yell! Then he heard Detective Jones's voice shouting, agonized:

"Boyle! Boyle. *Boyle! Look for the white mark! The white mark!*"

Then a savage roar followed—a deafening clicking, then a serene, unbroken silence. Boyle knew as well as though he had witnessed the act that the telephone had been torn from the wall.

(*Continued in our next issue.*)

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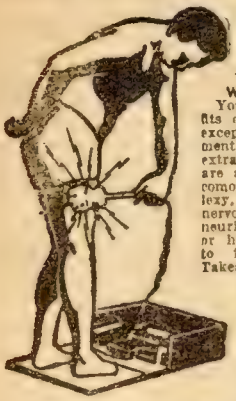

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The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
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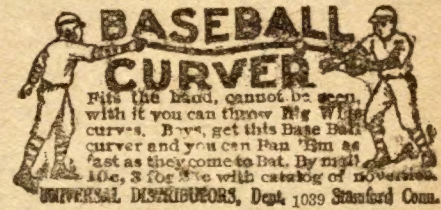

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